

DOCTORAL THESIS

Teacher as Director: An Investigation of Theatre-Making in Greek schools

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Teacher as Director: An Investigation of Theatre-Making in Greek schools.

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Abstract

This thesis centres on an analysis of two school theatre rehearsals that took place in Athens in 2010 directed by four classroom teachers: Katerina's and Sophia's direction of Iakovos Kambanelis' "*Fairytale without a name*" for School A in Piraeus, Attica; and Petros' and Maria's direction of Mike Kenny's "*The boy with the Suitcase*" for School B¹, Attica.

By examining the classroom teacher as director this project has two encompassing aims. The first is to analyse the micro-practices of rehearsals from week to week. In the analysis that follows, I will question the wider socio-cultural and institutional context, and explore the relationship between the micro-practices and the contexts² in which they function. The second aim is to develop a framework which could then be adapted, modified or completed either by classroom teachers who put on school theatre productions, or by theatre practitioners involved with school theatre performances.

After exploring rehearsal research methodologies adopted thus far in the professional theatre, the researcher advances a set of organising principles, drawn largely from ethnography, that constitute the theoretical framework of this thesis. From Chapter Three onwards, the thesis analyses the rehearsal, the teachers/directors and how they developed and produced the work. Data consists of recorded material, field notes and transcripts of interviews with the teachers/directors.

¹ Schools A and B are specific schools in Attica but their identities are not disclosed in terms of confidentiality for the research.

² Contexts refer to the playtext, the practitioners and all the paraphernalia around the two productions which will be examined further later in the thesis.

The thesis then examines the rehearsal practices themselves—what it means to ‘work at the table’ or ‘on the floor’ or ‘on the set’. The micro- and macro-practices and discourses with which they were framed are explored on their own terms rather than through recourse to notions of acting traditions. Teachers/Directors do not refer to any particular theatrical method but talk about approaches such as ‘discovering meaning in the script’, ‘discovering characters’ psychologies’ and ‘constructing a performance’ coupled with the broader pervading discourses of ‘immigration’, ‘and ‘political corruption’ in Greece.

The thesis will examine how the two rehearsal processes studied are complementary to each other. Finally, the knowledge which emanated from the study is to inform *model* which classroom teachers might use in putting on theatrical productions in their schools.

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Without the animate material my research would be soulless.

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Ethics regulations

All the names used in this thesis, to identify the individuals concerned in the fieldwork and the participant interviewees, are pseudonyms. Although all the participants agreed that their names could be disclosed, for ethical reasons the researcher decided not to. All the pictures in this thesis have been published with participants' consent but for ethical reasons the researcher decided not to disclose their faces, although at the time of the publication of this thesis all the students are over 18 years old.

Acronyms:

T/D: Teacher Director

S/A: Student Actor

TiS: Theatre in Schools

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1. A brief description of who I am

The research background upon which this thesis is based is a story I will tell; a story of my research ambitions, previous knowledge and experience and, above all, what my research and that of others has revealed. As with any story which claims to reveal insights and wisdom gained, it is important to know who the storyteller *is*.

In contrast to the depersonalised detachment of the quantitative, experimental and scientific researcher, I am bringing a qualitative, ethnographic approach to this research. It is therefore important that I declare a number of things about myself.

Having worked as both a primary school teacher and a secondary drama teacher whilst simultaneously performing as an actor and director for over twenty years, I became interested in looking more thoroughly at theatrical education in Greek schools. My experience throughout these twenty years has been that consistency and quality are the most important issues for both primary and secondary teachers when they stage a school play. The question that comes to everyone's mind - and rightly so - is: what does a generalist teacher do when required to put on a production of a school play?

It is obligatory, albeit in the form of an unwritten code, an unwritten law, that a generalist teacher (and more especially a *primary* generalist teacher in the Greek education system) is expected to – I will avoid saying *must* - put on theatrical performances at least five times throughout the school year. These are for:

- Religious reasons: the Nativity plays staged at Christmas;

- National Days: 25th March celebrating the Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Rulers; 28th October celebrating the Greek Resistance against the German Occupation;
- Contemporary History: 17th November celebrating the Protest Day against the Junta in November 1973;
- The end of the school year.

Throughout my years of teaching these questions kept going round my mind. I have seen teacher colleagues stage excellent performances, despite them bringing only their good intentions and their love for theatre and children to bear on the performance. Counter-intuitively, I have seen colleagues from the arts field – both accomplished actors and theatre facilitators - commit – and not just aesthetically – “crimes”¹ in the name of the supposed theatrical knowledge they bring to the task. I have seen ordinary school teachers strive to overcome both in-school and external stress factors to achieve the best possible result for the students who take part in a performance, for the school community and for the wider community they belong to.

During my working experience I was interested in putting on plays which reflected the children’s needs and interests, but I could not avoid staging plays to satisfy the head teachers or the local educational authorities: that is, conventional plays which represented the occasion for which they were staged, such as the Nativity. I did, however, also have the opportunity to stage more contemporary plays, comedies and tragedies or even traditional Greek Fairytales adapted and written in a modern way, as well as plays devised by the students.

¹ See more on page 95 (about supplementary observations)

My Masters degree in Applied Theatre and Theatre for the Community expanded my thinking about the field of theatre in educational contexts and gave me the chance to see forms I had not seen before such as theatre for the community, theatre of the oppressed, theatre with prison inmates and theatre as a tool for expanding knowledge in a second language, which was the theme I researched for my masters degree.

Completing my MA thesis on this topic and using an action research approach - learning by doing at the same time - gave me the chance to look deeper at my own weaknesses as a director and teacher. As Cole (1998) pointed out, the role of the teacher is entwined with that of the director.

Having established my identity as a qualitative researcher, I now want to explain why I am interested in the topic which forms the focus of this research.

1.2. Why I am interested in this topic

My thesis centres on how the generalist teacher becomes a director when s/he puts on a play with his/her students. This duality results from a requirement for the classroom teacher in Greek Primary and Secondary Education to stage public theatrical performances with his/her students. Performances can take place, for example, on

school premises, in town halls as part of a regional festival or even in international festivals abroad.

I found the above topic fascinating since the teachers who take over the directorial responsibility of such activity are ordinary classrooms teachers who are not specialists in the theatrical field. These teachers' specialisms are often languages – either Ancient or Modern Greek - physical education (Greek Pedagogic Institute, Curricula, 2003) or teachers of any other subject. For example, the teachers that took part in my research come from different subject areas: two language teachers, both teaching Ancient Greek, one Economics teacher and one Physics teacher.

Having completed my MA in London, I became aware of a major difference between what happens in Greece and what is happening in England. Theatre in the Greek educational system is quite different from the well-known and long-established traditions of theatre and drama in education in the UK and many other countries. More specifically, in other countries it is usually the specialist drama teacher who teaches and guides students on how to put on a performance whereas in Greece this is part of the classroom teacher's responsibility. I had never questioned before what skills and knowledge might be required for a school teacher to “direct” his/her students towards a performance. Coming from an educational culture which expected this duality of its teachers, I simply accepted that this was a task that the teacher should, would and definitely could do. As a classroom teacher both in the UK and Greece, I started questioning the validity of the system that required this.

I am a trained actor, so I had ideas on how to put on a performance; but what about my colleagues? How did they do it year-in year-out, and why hadn't I asked this question before? I could recall certain colleagues who felt helpless and inadequate when it came to putting on a student performance. I wanted to find out how teachers approached the task. Did they use any discernible method? If yes, where had they acquired it? From seminars perhaps? Reading? Personal insight? However, the exploration of theatre in schools and its educational, and other, contexts carries two main dangers: either we can "simplify" the teacher's work as a director and reduce its complexity or we can overemphasize its contextual complexity. To avoid this, I realised that I needed to pay attention to how the local community, the local educational authority, the school itself, the teachers/directors, the students, and parents, all influenced the "practice" evolving in the rehearsal room.

1.3. The aspects of the topic I will investigate

There is a huge range and variety of theatre and drama in the educational system. Different uses of drama have been established in schools and with young people more widely, including Theatre in Education, Drama in Education and Youth Theatre. We can trace the development of Theatre in Education and Drama in Education over time in influential texts such as *Child Drama* (Slade 1954), *Development through Drama* (Way 1967), *Drama as a Learning Medium* (Wagner 1976) and *Drama as Education* (Bolton 1984).

What I am interested in is Theatre in School. All of the above involve Theatre in School in different forms, either by introducing professional theatre groups to the school premises or through the drama teacher creating drama activities with the students which

develop formally or informally into performance. However, the approach I will take is to examine the way Greek schooling applies Theatre in School and, more specifically, the way the generalist/classroom teacher embraces the task by becoming the director of the school play. In her presentation in the world conference about the Arts in Education¹, dramatologist/theatrologist Georgina Kakoudaki (2006) claimed that the usual theatrical activities in Greece throughout the 20th century were rooted in genuine productions of a theatrical nature, with procedures very similar to those of the professional theatre - pupils were selected after an audition, close attention was paid to the proper backdrop or setting and text-oriented acting was the accepted norm, for example. School productions of plays were presented at the end of the year or on National holidays, in small cities and usually in local festivals, something that is still happening in Greece. Having stated my personal interest in theatre in Greek schooling I now lay out a brief history of the evolution of theatre/drama in Greece.

1.4. A brief history of ‘Drama in Greek culture’

It is generally accepted that Greece is the original home of western drama (δράμα) and theatre (θέατρο). Over thousands of years, Greek drama was performed as part of religious festivals (Eric Csapo, William J. Slater, 1995) and theatre has helped to shape the minds and ethos of many people in Greece and internationally as a result of its strongly didactic, social and political nature.

The drama in Ancient Greek cosmos was considered as a mode of education both for adults and, as Aristophanes claims, “school boys have a master to teach them, grown, ups have the poets” (Frogs, Aristophanes- Act II). He stated that good poetry

¹ World Conference About Arts in Education, Lisbon, 6th March, 2006.

was to offer moral and political awareness in order for the citizens to create a real city – Athens – and real Athenians too. Poets had a moral duty to do so, and were regarded as teachers both for the citizens who attended the performances and for those who did not.

In Ancient Greece, drama was perhaps the only mode of communication for society. From a current perspective, it is possible to utilize drama as a mode of training employees to improve their job-related knowledge, skills and attitudes for the generic purpose of enhancing human performance and organizational performance. Drama can be used for all kinds of purposes, within and for the community, for schools, for clubs, for vulnerable groups in the society, for deprived and oppressed communities. Role Playing and Behaviour Modelling are training techniques which involve basic dramas approaches.

Drama has utility in training employees in interpersonal and cognitive skills, presenting ideal behaviour for solving a particular problem or dealing with a certain demand. Both participants in drama and observers can benefit. As McLeish points out “the moment you characterise individuals in telling a story, it turns into drama” (2003:3).

Life in Greece has always been bound up with dramatic expression in various forms and shapes spanning the long history of the nation: "The Greeks...were addicted to theatre," (Green, 1996:56). Folk festivities, symbolic celebrations about nature, carnivals, ceremonies, litanies and rituals, some of which are rooted in ancient Greece and the origins of drama, and other rituals and ceremonies which are part of the Christian Orthodox tradition, have all historically provided children with opportunities to participate actively in moments of theatricality and spirituality.

Even today there are children who take part in the Greek liturgy – those who dress up like deacons and help the priest by holding sticks or other accessories, thereby assisting the performance of the liturgy. Every Sunday, before Sunday School, children attending the liturgy are asked to help with its practicalities. Children thereby become part of the ritual, part of a performance from childhood, often as participants, but definitely as observers.

1.5. A brief description of the Educational System

My thesis attempts to unravel the complexity of the activity, thereby illuminating how Theatre in Schools (henceforth TiS) works in Greek Primary and Secondary Education. Before presenting this complexity, I will describe briefly the structure of the Greek educational system which is the broader context of TiS. Education in Greece is a part of a highly centralized, hierarchical and bureaucratic system. After the constitution of Greece as a nation-state in 1830, it was organized on the basis of the German and French educational systems (see Psacharopoulos 1985 for details).

The Ministry of Education and Life-long Learning Education (MINEDU) implement Greece's education policy under the following top-down structure (for details see Efstratiou *et al.* 2009):

1. The MINEDU is responsible for preparing bills and decrees and for publishing the ministerial decisions and circulars which regulate educational practice in all schools.

2. The Regional Educational Directorates administer and supervise primary and secondary schools in each district. Each Directorate (depending on its size) has a specific number of School Advisors who are responsible for a specific number of schools. These Advisors visit schools and provide pedagogical support to teachers as well as organize pedagogical seminars for teachers' in-service training.
3. The Directorates of Education administer the schools in each prefecture.
4. When a prefecture is large and has many schools, education offices administer specific groups of schools in each province.
5. Each school is administered by a headteacher and an assistant headteacher who are responsible for organising the school timetable and applying ministerial decisions and circulars.

Teachers who are responsible for teaching in specific classrooms in public schools are employed as permanent civil servants. They are appointed after passing examinations organised by the MINEDU. Every two years, teachers vote in order to elect representatives for: (a) the Council Service, which operates out of each education office and oversees teachers' working conditions (e.g. their transfer from one school to another) and (b) the Local and the National Teachers' Union.

Centralisation is also a characteristic of how school knowledge is organised in the Greek educational system. This structure is implemented by the Pedagogical Institute (PI) which is supervised by the MINEDU. The PI consists of academic staff and educationalists who are chosen by the Minister of Education from a variety of disciplines. The duty of the PI is "to formulate the guidelines, draft the timetable and the curricula, approve and order textbooks, apply vocational guidance, introduce issues and

innovations, apply new teaching methods, promote in-service training of teachers” (Efstratiou *et al.*, 2009: 8-9).

The PI’s¹ organisation of school knowledge has the following top-down structure:

1. Curricula: They provide the general educational goals at each level, e.g. the educational goals of Primary and Secondary Education.
2. Syllabi: They prescribe the specific learning goals in each subject in each Grade, e.g. the syllabus of the subject “Language” in the 6th Grade (11-12 years).
3. Textbooks (common to all students): They consist of student books (containing the “main theory” of a specific subject and some basic exercises) and workbooks (usually filled with exercises and applications of the theory contained in the student book).
4. Teachers’ books: Each textbook is accompanied by a Teacher’s book which includes lesson plans, e.g. a list of the required materials for a specific lesson, a list of the objectives of a specific lesson or instructions about the events which make up each lesson.

However, in 1997 a new educational bill was enacted which harmonised Greek educational policy with that of the European Union (EU). After 1999 particularly, Greece began to see new innovative curricula, new learning activities and new approaches to old activities introduced into schools.

Following these changes, there was further reform to the Greek school curricula in 2003. The new national curriculum (2003) emphasises both ‘an interdisciplinary approach’ and ‘cross-thematic integration’ and seeks to reduce the negative effects of

¹ The Pedagogique Institute of Education was renamed to Institute of Educational Policy <http://www.iep.edu.gr/index.php?lang=en>.

teacher-centred and fragmented knowledge-based education (Alahiotis, 2002a, 2002b; Matsagouras, 2002; Panagakos 2002). It consists of two parts: (i) a ‘Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework’ (CCTF); and (ii) ‘Individual Subject Curricula’ (Syllabi; ISC), one for each school subject. The CCTF tries to diminish the boundaries between different school subjects and presents knowledge as a unified totality that is taught through themes (e.g. the lifecycle of both humans and animals, identity, etc). While the ‘Syllabi; ISC’ distinguishes between school subjects, it tries to link their content through educational activities (Alahiotis, 2002a, 2002b; Matsagouras, 2002; Panagakos, 2002).

In 2008 the concept of the “Smart School” was introduced into the curriculum by the Minister of Education. “Smart School” was an idea borrowed from the USA and more specifically from the Californian Educational System based on the following characteristics:

- a) Logistics: buildings and new technologies;
- b) Teaching staff;
- c) Curriculum and content of subjects.

Teaching in “Smart Schools” does not follow the traditional methods. No blackboard, just interactive ones, no books, but each student has his/her own notebook. These approaches are still developing in a considerable number of primary and secondary schools. For example not all schools have interactive whiteboard or individual notebooks.

The old teacher-centred notion of education gave way to a student-centred approach. The teacher is the coordinator and guide for how the students attain knowledge. The student is taught how to learn (MINEDU, 2008). However, the “Smart

School” was never properly implemented in the Greek curriculum due to the lack of necessary logistics and the shortage of money required employing and training the necessary educational staff for this ambitious project. Elections were held and the new government, inaugurated in March 2009, was all ready to implement what had been announced in the pre-election build-up: “The New School for the 21st Century”.

And then the “The New School for the 21st Century” actually appeared. It was a new idea conceived just a few months before I began to write this section of the thesis. Finally, in August 2011 the new idea went to the Greek Parliament to be voted on by party members. It was considered to be a major reform bill for every level of the Greek education system: from pre-school years to academia. Unfortunately, the changes could not be applied due to financial restrictions. Financial cuts in the education sector were massive. Specialist teachers who would teach new subjects, like theatre in every school, ICT, foreign languages, were not hired.

A “New School”, which was the modified Greek version of the ‘Smart School’ supports the life-long-learning idea, inextricably connected to the wider society, “a school without walls” (MINEDU, 2010). Teachers, parents, the students themselves and local authorities have a constitutional role, and together they create the school. It is a student-centred idea, not greatly dissimilar to the “Smart School”. The principles on which the “New Schools” are founded are primarily that the student:

- a) becomes an intellectual;
- b) develops as a “mini scientist”;
- c) becomes a researcher;

- d) acquires the skill of “learning how to learn”;
- e) becomes a language learner;
- f) becomes a Greek citizen – and a citizen of the world.

With regard to this last point, it is interesting to note that, since the establishment of the New Greek State in 1830, theatrical performances have sought to offer up a model of citizenship. School theatre aimed - and still does aim - to “reflect the political claim of the era, and has been used as a good means to enrich the national or nationalistic identity” (Kakoudaki, 2006:2).

In the “New School” the teacher is the protagonist. All the teachers should have had additional training in new educational and teaching techniques in order to meet the needs of the new era: seminars in ITC (Informing Teachers on the New Curriculum), for example. Digital technology is expected to fulfil the needs for the new era: no books but CDs, no school bags at home anymore, but laptops. Two years ago the Greek Ministry of Education, with co-operation from the European Committee¹, began subsidising students’ laptop purchases in order to meet the needs of the “New School”. It was a programme sponsored by the EU but stopped due to the recession in 2011.

The “New School” came with many promises and lofty ambitions. New jobs for teachers and specialists were announced alongside the prospective plans. But instead of the expected expansion, the Ministry cut down on the numbers of specialist teaching positions – including drama teachers – and reduced the hiring of new teachers. Due to the financial crisis, the Ministry merged school classes in order to save more money.

¹ Part of the European Union responsible for subsidising educational projects.

But what was the position of theatre/drama in the Greek curriculum? How did the financial crisis affect drama teaching and the arts and humanities more generally? Are these moves due solely to the financial crisis in Greece or to something more global that leads to the reduction of funding in the humanities whilst sustaining funding in the sciences?

1.6. The status of theatre and drama in the Greek curriculum

Theatre was introduced into the Greek curriculum in 1990. Before that, there was no official guide on how theatre should be applied in schools. General teachers would apply theatre techniques based on their own knowledge and disposition. They would implement ‘theatre playing’ (a group activity of theatre games), ‘school dramatisation’ (a representation of a narrative in a fictional dramatic context by a group of pupils), ‘school plays’ (a process similar to that of the professional theatre, with character building, costumes, music, lights and design), school visits by drama and theatre professionals or visits to theatre for youth, typically performances made by adults for school audiences. (Sextou, 202, Kakoudaki, 2006).

Drama has never been a compulsory subject in the Greek curriculum in either primary or secondary stages. It exists in the form of celebrating National Days and the end of the school year. In 2000 the “All Day School” was introduced to the Greek educational system to help parents who work and who were not able to pick up their children at the end of the normal school day. The All Day Schools’ programme was devised to keep children busy in a productive way. It employed teachers with different specialities such as art teachers, gym teachers, ICT teachers, music teachers, drama

teachers and of course generalist teachers to assist the students with their homework. The after-school programme was able to be adjusted according to students' requests or depending on what each headteacher thought the school should offer. For example, a headteacher who values gymnastics might build an after school programme based on this activity, whilst another who values the arts might guide students to choose an after school class in that area. According to Persephone Sextou's survey (Sextou, 2002) drama teachers were the least in demand for extra-curricular activities, with head teachers and students more often demanding activities related to practical, scientific subjects and not subjects from the humanities and arts areas.

In the latter case, the local educational authorities would normally hire dramatologists to do theatre classes after school hours. In many cases the head teachers would take advantage of these dramatologists and use them when staging a play for the national or religious celebrations. In many cases, the dramatologists shared the "burden" with the generalist teachers, but if the latter did not want to be involved, the former would undertake the whole task.

Until 2010, in the second year of the Greek Lyceum, equivalent to Year 10 in the UK, students were able to ask to have drama as an optional subject. If student numbers were such that the drama class could go ahead, the secondary school headteacher could ask for a drama teacher to be seconded to their school by the local educational authorities. Thus the drama class was a serendipitous incident, arranged at the discretion of individual schools and, particularly, head teachers. What had been considered part of children's education since ancient times (Georgousopoulou, 2008) had become an optional one depending on the interests of both head teachers and students. In the case of one of the schools I investigated, the students had demanded that the headteacher 'find' a teacher from the existing staff who would direct them in putting

on a play. Thanks to those students I was able to conduct one of my two fieldwork studies.

During the period I conducted my research (2011), a huge debate occurred concerning Theatrical Education in Greece. On 21st of November 2011, the Ministry of Education pronounced a decree under the title "Approved Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education for pilot application in the field of Culture and Art Activities in primary and secondary education" (MINEDU, 2-12-2011)¹ and distributed it to schools on the 22nd December 2011. This document clearly stated that the only arts subjects in the curriculum would be music and art. There is no reference to any theatrical education lesson. Drama teachers and students at University Theatre Departments all over Greece acted immediately and issued letters of protest both to the Ministry of Education and to members of all the parties in the Greek Parliament. On 30th January 2012, drama teachers and students organised a live protest outside the Ministry asking to see and talk to the Minister and handing in personal letters of protest. Blogs² and teatrologists' websites³ were published, informing everyone of the "New 21st Century School", one in which theatrical lessons would be withdrawn from both primary and secondary education resulting in job losses for drama teachers and a reduction in the quality of student education.

Under pressure from all parties, the Ministry of Education has since issued a revised, watered down decree in which it states that "theatrical education is not abolished". The document tries to highlight the importance of the generalist teacher in

¹ <http://static.diavgeia.gov.gr/doc/45%CE%A869-%CE%93%CE%99%CE%9B>

² <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/%CF%88%CE%AE%CF%86%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BC%CE%B1-%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%81%CF%84%CF%85%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-.html> (κατάργηση της θεατρικής αγωγής- abolition of the Theatrical Education)

³ <http://www.pesyth.gr/>

conducting theatrical education by saying “in all secondary schools during the national celebration days and other cultural events, students and teachers are involved in theatre performances under the classroom teacher’s guidance”. (MINEDU, 2/2/2012)¹

From this it is clear that the classroom teacher is the only one seen to be responsible for school theatre performances. This makes it even more imperative for teachers to know how to meet the needs of the new educational order and the challenging economic situation of Greece, which creates and modifies many aspects of our lives, including that of theatrical education in schools. The present situation makes my research which started three years ago more topical than I expected.

1.7. Summary Problem Statement

Although, in 2003, 2007 and 2011 the Greek national curriculum for aesthetics² subscribed in part to a recent trend in harmony with theatre education it was doubtful whether the generalist teacher would be willing or able to work on the new concept - that of the teacher becoming the ‘director’ of Theatre in Schools. Specifically it sought to continue to offer theatre lessons without including it in the official school hours but in the after-school curriculum, where there was a demand for it. This is currently the official view for Theatre Studies in the Greek curriculum.

The reality though has been different. The generalist teacher was the one that had to undertake the job of putting on plays as an important aspects of the many and varied celebrations of Greek national and religious life. Classroom teachers needed a

¹ See Appendix 2

² Theatrical Education in the Greek Curriculum comes under the umbrella of Aesthetic Education.

pattern, a model to follow. The majority of them would simply draw on experience gained from previous performances they had undertaken.

However, there was a gap between theory and practice. Although there are guidelines and suggestions on *which kinds of* teachers should apply to direct students, there are no guidelines or research to advice on *how* students should be directed by generalist teachers. Before the Greek Aesthetic curriculum could be expanded to include theatre culture, it also seemed essential to find out more about existing theatre genres in Greece, how teachers viewed and experienced them and how they used them to put together a performance. Finally, it was crucial to explore possible problems and issues that curriculum planners might need to take into account before introducing theatre to students. This requires the strengthening of teachers' belief in and knowledge of theory and practice when mounting performances with their students. I am not supporting the idea that classroom teachers have to become trained directors, or should replace an acknowledged dramatologist. My research aimed to reveal how teacher/directors actually operate in a school context.

1.8. Research Questions

Whether the teacher has experience in the theatrical field or not s/he will be asked to stage plays. In this context the following questions arise:

1. Can a classroom teacher direct a school theatre performance to the level of success?
2. What skills does a school teacher need to direct the school play?
3. Does s/he need to be knowledgeable about theatre techniques?
4. How do the teachers formulate their ideas about what 'theatre' actually is or should be?
5. How do the teachers actually direct the students?

CHAPTER 2 : Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

To understand properly the nature of theatre from a particular period, we must contextualise it (Moretti, in De Marines, 1984). This is what I intend to do in this section. The material I provide here should make it easier for the reader to understand the position of Greek Theatre within a school setting. TiS will be contextualised in terms of:

- Its definition;
- Its value;
- Mapping the literature.

In the following pages, I review a wide range of literature on rehearsals, from newspaper articles, to interviews with directors and actors, to practitioners writing about their own work, as well as systematic accounts of the rehearsal process. These sources, whilst by no means exhaustive, provide a productive overview of the sort of the research and writing approaches that have thus far been adopted. I have also distilled key issues that will prove pivotal in advancing the methodology adopted in this thesis as well as a possible methodology for future rehearsal studies. I would also like to clarify that all the relevant literature, the overwhelming majority of which dealt with professional productions, has been adapted and modified in order to illuminate the school production process.

By organising the literature as stated above, I hope to foreground specific research positions: what might be involved in doing empirical-based research? What is it to be deeply submerged in the rehearsal practices of school productions? What is it to be detached from them? What is it to understand school theatre rehearsals within the context of explicit critical thinking?

2.2. Defining Theatre in School (TiS)

There are a number of terms and theories around children's theatre. For example, *Theatre for Young People*, *Children's Theatre*, and *Theatre for Young Audiences* all suggest a form of theatre which is separate from the adult world and which fulfils a separate function. In common usage "children's theatre" usually means adults performing for children. Alexandra Zuralski (2008) in *Drama and Early Foreign Language Teaching* defines the kinds of theatre which, in their making, take children into account, thus:

Children's Theatre is a formal theatrical experience in which a play is presented for an audience of children. Its purpose is to entertain and to encourage enjoyment and appreciation of theatre as an art form. Consequently the focus is on absorbing the interest of the audience. Although there may be child roles, the majority of characters are played by adults. (Goldberg 1974, taken from Hollindale 1996: 209).

Goldberg identifies two main forms of theatre in school contexts:

Young People's Theatre [which] involves a performance by professional actors in an educational context or in any space where young people form the audience, such as youth clubs or community centres. It is frequently based on social issues. (Hollindale 1996: 209)

... and Theatre in Education, which involves "work done by professional actor-teachers in a school context" (Hollindale 1996:209); the most important aim here is to use theatre and drama to create learning opportunities in relationship to the curriculum.

Zuralski goes on to mention another kind of theatre involving children which she does not give a particular name to but describes as: “dramatic performances by children performed for adults and/or children” (Zuralski, 2008:3). This is where the theatre in Greek schools comes in and it coincides perfectly with the description given by Georgina Kakoudaki when she states that theatre in Greece is:

... concerned as a solid production on a theatrical stage with means and procedure very similar to the professional theatre. Pupils are selected after an audition, type casting is practised, and there is an austere concentration on a proper scenic environment and text-oriented acting. (Kakoudaki, 2006: 2)

This I identify as ‘Theatre in Schools’ (TiS).

2.3. TiS: an extracurricular activity or mid-curricular activity?

Within TiS there are distinctions regarding when the rehearsals take place. In preparation for the National Day school productions, (28th October, 17th November, a Christmas’ play, 25th March), teachers and students would rehearse within school hours. However in preparation for the annual play – performed at the end of the school year, mainly in secondary schools - teachers and students will rehearse in extra-curricular time.

In the case of the National Day school productions theatre could be considered a curricular activity, not just because of the scheduling of rehearsals within school hours but because the purpose of the whole event follows the National Curriculum guidelines and is organised and executed by classroom teachers¹. The National Day celebration is, however, the main focus of the performance; the kind of theatre taking place is

¹ Greek National Curriculum.

secondary. Whilst some teachers possess the necessary skills to create this form of theatre, but the majority of them:

... do not have the theatre knowledge and skills and training to present it in an appropriate aesthetic and artistic way, to achieve something 'different' and to avoid the usual 'scholarisation' of the event. (Grammatas, 2008:25-26).

For the annual play, teachers - mainly secondary school teachers - are free to stage plays without the twin pressures of the National Curriculum and the state. Teachers typically choose to stage plays of significance for them and for the children. As rehearsals take place out of school hours, the yearly school play will be considered as an extracurricular activity for the purposes of this study. Its staging ultimately depends on teachers' willingness to become involved.

Mahoney *et al* (2002) provide the following definition of extracurricular events:

An extracurricular activity needs to meet three criteria: 1) occurring together with others in your own age group, 2) having an adult leader, and 3) meeting at least once a week at a regular time. (c.f., Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). (In Mahoney *et al.* 2002: 73)

The placements I observed satisfied these criteria. However, while the annual play is defined as an extracurricular activity, the school community, teachers, colleagues from other schools, peers and the local educational community, see it as an integral part of the liberal education offered by the state. For example, parents see it as an in-school activity since their children participate in something that is being organised by a teacher. In my placements the head teachers from both schools came to say hello to the teachers and students and both stayed to watch the rehearsals. In this and other ways, the school is 'present' during the whole process.

I would argue that TiS and specifically the final school theatre event mainly occurring in the secondary schools, cannot merely be perceived as an exclusive extracurricular activity *or* as a curricular activity. The final school theatre event complies with all the aforementioned criteria, but at the same time the theatre event occurs within and around the school environment: teachers and students use school premises; the selection of the play complies with educational purposes¹ selected by T/Ds (see Petro's interview in the appendixes of this thesis); colleagues, headteacher, peers help in the completion of the performance. For all the above reasons I would refer to it as a *mid-curricular activity*, which gives freedom to the participants to work towards the event out of school hours but at the same time working on behalf and because of the school.

Is TiS perceived as theatre in its own right? What is it that people do when they enact this form of theatre? How do students benefit by participating in school productions?

2.4. The Value of Theatre in School for Students

During informal discussions with the S/As at one of the schools during a rehearsal break, I asked them if they liked what they were doing. The maturity of the answer from one student surprised me:

When the school year started we expected that we would have a teacher, not necessarily a drama teacher, and that he would do a theatre play with us, as usual. The days passed and not one of the teachers seemed willing to

¹ The criteria for selecting the particular plays can be summed up as follows:

- a. Students loved it from the reading process.
- b. Similar problems to theirs.
- c. Topical and current. Deals with social and humanitarian issues.
- d. It was playful in its sincerity. Had musical ingredient that students loved. (Question 18, Teachers interviews, June 2010)

undertake the task. We were in Year 10 now and for each year of our school life we had participated in TiS productions. But this year the prospect did not seem at all promising. So we decided to take the matter into our own hands. We talked to the headteacher and we demanded to stage a play this year as we had done in all previous years. He promised that he would raise the matter at the next staff committee. Then we decided to speak to each teacher and to make clear our intention and desire to put on a play. It was December and although we had staged plays for one National Day (28th October) and one for the “Polytechnic University” (17th November, Protest Day when students and workers rose up against the Junta Rule) we still had not heard from our headteacher. But we were determined and we would not let the matter drop without an answer and a positive one. We kept pushing the teachers and at the school committee, Mrs Katerina and Mrs Sophia agreed to be our directors.

(Informal conversation with a student from school A, 15th January, 2010)

What made these students so persistent? They knew that staging a play would take a considerable amount of their leisure time. In addition to their normal class work and homework, they knew that they would have to spend time learning lines. They were aware that, by working on a performance, they would forfeit their Saturday afternoons and evenings, whilst their peers would be out having fun.

Charles Koun, one of the most important theatre directors and teachers in Greek theatre stated in an interview that ‘we make theatre for our soul’¹. Later on, this phrase became the title of a book dedicated to his memory. What was the motivation for School A students if not Koun's idea of making theatre for their soul?

Before I begin to distinguish between adult theatre and school theatre made by students I think it would be useful to define what we mean by *theatre* as an artistic and cultural phenomenon; I will then try to set the boundaries between theatre for adults and theatre made by students and directed by the classroom teacher. I have no intention of

¹ (quoted from the cover of Koun's, 1987 “We make theatre for our soul”) and as I have read in a school's website “we make theatre for our souls and put our souls in it” http://4lyk-stavroup.thess.sch.gr/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=17&Itemid=89).

covering every aspect of the very wide question “What is theatre?”, rather I will use selected terms and definitions which relate to theatre in a school context, thereby clarifying the distinctions between theatre for adults and TiS.

2.5. Theatre and the theatrical experience through the eyes of experts

The discussion of what theatre is takes us back to when Aristotle wrote in his “Poetics” that theatre is *mimesis*; that is, art imitating life. But what does it mean to imitate life on stage? To copy the original mores? As Boal explains, to imitate life means to re-create it: “Art re-creates the creative principle of created things.” (Boal, 1979/1995:1). For example, directors and actors are called on to re-create a created character through their inspiration and imagination: to make the character a real person. A character does not truly exist, even on paper, until it is re-created by a living person.

Today *mimesis* is mainly understood as *representing* life and not *mimicking* life on stage. I thought it would be useful to clarify this point since the first challenge I faced in my observations was when a teacher directing a theatre play for 25th March had the students imitating movements¹, opening and closing their mouths to speak words which were in fact emanating from a pre-production *recording* of their voices.

Schonmann (2007) mentions that there are two main ingredients in theatre: the actor and the audience. She makes no references to directors or to the stage. In this sense theatre made by students and adult theatre are identical. However, Schonmann believes that children’s theatre differs from adult theatre in that young people are at a different stage of development; thus, aesthetically speaking, adult theatre will

¹ This question is considered in more detail on page 127.

necessarily be superior to that of children. I will argue that this is not necessarily so. On the day of the School B's performance, for example, I witnessed two incidents within the audience. The first occurred in the middle of the performance. It was a very dramatic moment where one of the protagonists was submerged in sea water and a member of the audience was heard to exclaim, "What these poor creatures go through in their life!" (Anonymous, 2nd May 2010). The second incident occurred the same evening at the end of the performance when I heard a woman say, "That was theatre!" (Anonymous, 2nd May 2010). What made this school theatre performance "believable" and "theatre"? Maybe it was what Neelands, a drama/theatre educator, calls:

... the direct experience that is shared when people imagine and behave as if they were other than themselves in some other place at another time.
(Neelands, 1991: 4).

At the opening night at School B, a "direct shared experience" had taken place.

2.6. Theatre in School – Adult Theatre

Usually TiS performances are thought of by many as being inferior to professional ones in that they are a form of amateur theatre which lacks integrity and performance values. For example, a well-known Greek Director, Takis Tzamarias, in a 2007 interview¹ was asked why he did not choose a more conservative and traditional way to dress his actresses². He replied that "if they were dressed like this, it would be like a school production" (Tzamarias, interview, 2007). Another example comes from a critic who had reviewed a performance for an electronic magazine³. He stated:

¹ Published in an electronic theatre journal <http://www.mixtape.gr/takis-tzamargias-betty-shamieh-black-eyed/>.

² They represented Arabic woman.

³ For the performance "Red in the Forest" November, 2011, <http://www.athinorama.gr/theatre/data/performances/?id=10009396&selTab=1>

I had the impression I was watching a school production. I wasted 15 euros on such an amateur production, while I could have paid less money to see a complete and remarkable production. (Anonymous, 23/12/2011)

Esslin (1983) also believes that the material for student productions is often weak and patronizing. Additionally, Carol Lorenz (2002, in Schonmann 2007) supports the idea that student theatre is generally based on concrete texts, fixed structures and, particularly, often limited aesthetics. Although they may be concrete texts, they are often carefully selected. For instance, the two school theatre productions I observed were of well-structured plays, written by well-known playwrights, one Greek, one English, and had previously been performed by professional groups internationally and had been well received by audiences and critics alike. When Stanislavski was asked to make a distinction between theatre for adults and theatre for children; he replied that the only important difference is that, for children, theatre should be better (Quoted from the cover of McCaslin's book, 1978). Was he referring to theatre *for* children or theatre made *by* children? What did he mean by "better"? Better acting? Better directing?

It is not my intention to equate adult/professional theatre with school theatre. My intention is to understand the nature of theatre in school contexts. Although school theatre may involve relatively young and inexperienced school students, it can still create empathy in an audience, as happened on the opening night at School B. Additionally teachers/directors (T/Ds henceforth) have created these performances and guide the students to play roles other than their own self. Students had to identify with their roles, a process which was not always feasible for the students to understand or to accept. For example, Magda, a student protagonist said in one of the rehearsals "I will

cry truthfully on the night of the performance”. She could not believe that her role could cry during rehearsal. She could not identify her role with her real self. She could not:

... activate her thoughts and live not only in the present but also in her imagination, in the future; and this future orientation gave her the ability to cope with hypothetical situations that are physically far away from her but at the same moment are part of her. (Piaget, in Schonmann, 2007:25)

Based on the above I decided to treat TiS as a form of theatre art in its own right. After all, Lutley, a theatre theorist argued that school theatre should be treated on terms equal to its professional counterpart, “It is theatre” she stated, “ ... not simplified adult theatre; children are not simplified adults” (Lutley, in Schonmann, 2007:15).

Towards the end of the writing of this thesis I discovered a review of School A’s performance of “*Fairytale Without a Name*” on the school’s website. The critic, Apostolos Fertis, starts his review by sharing some thoughts about the similarity of (a) school theatre performances and professional ones and (b) the student actor and the professional actor. In his treatment of the latter, he analyses the root of the Greek word for actor: ηθοποιός – ‘ethopeos’ – the literal meaning of which is ‘the ethos maker’. The critic states:

A school theatre performance is usually considered to be made exclusively by students. However, such a perception automatically undermines the performance piece as the spectator’s perspective is limited by the fact that he has to judge the students. Therefore he is not following the performance but simply looking at the student actors. His judgment is subjected both consciously and subconsciously to his perception of everyday school practices. This type of critique derives from authoritarian disciplinary school practices such as discrimination, comparison, examination, ranking, rewarding, personalisation, generalisation, supervision and surveillance. However, a theatrical production should only be seen within a poetic dimension. Without reference to age, attribute, communities, and beyond theatre competencies and beliefs. It should be seen as something that happened in a theatrical or a theatrical-like setting at a specific moment in time. As

something that was developed through the actions of all those who were part of the theatrical play, i.e. the actors; who on 8 May 2010 created and experienced for two hours an ethos which was communicated to us through their words, their bodies and their actions.¹

2.7. The director as a teacher

Giorgos Hatzidakis, a director and a theatre critic, wrote a review about Takis Tzamarias' directing approach:

...the director thought it was his duty to *teach* (emphasis is mine) historical events, to protect and preserve the *teaching element*. He did not manage to engage the audience. The audience was not carried away. The teacher marginalised the director. (Hatzidakis, theatre review, 12/01/2012)².

Takis Tzamarias, a former classroom teacher himself before he turned to academia and professional directing, was criticised for being a teacher when directing a professional performance. Are the roles of teacher and director incompatible? Should a teacher not possess certain attributes of a director and vice versa?

¹ <http://zanneiolykeio.mysch.gr/index.php/drastiriotites/theatrikesparastaseis>

Μια μαθητική θεατρική παράσταση, αντιμετωπίζεται συνήθως ως ένα πεπραγμένο μαθητών και μαθητριών. Μια τέτοια στάση, όμως, υπονομεύει αυτόματα την παράσταση καθεαυτή, διότι ο θεατής, περιορίζει το οπτικό του πεδίο και εγκαλεί τον εαυτό του να κρίνει μαθητές/τριες. βλέμμα του, δεν θεάται τα δρώμενα, αλλά τα παιδιά του σχολείου. Η αποτίμησή του, παραμένει δέσμια, εκούσια και ακούσια, σε τρόπους και συνήθειες κριτικής, οι οποίες εντάσσονται στο πλαίσιο της πρακτικής της σχολικής ζωής. Πρόκειται για ένα είδος κριτικής, που προκύπτει από σχολικές τεχνικές πειθαρχικής εξουσίας, όπως η διάκριση, η σύγκριση, η εξέταση, η ταξινόμηση, η επιβράβευση, η εξατομίκευση, η ολοποίηση, η παρατήρηση, η επιτήρηση.

Όμως, μια θεατρική παραγωγή, απαιτείται να βλέπεται μόνον ως ένα «ποίημα». Χωρίς αναφορές: σε ηλικίες, σε ιδιότητες, σε κοινότητες, σε εκτός θεάτρου δεξιότητες και πεποιθήσεις. Ως κάτι που ποιήθηκε, σε ένα χώρο θεατρικό ή οιονεί θεατρικό και σε ορισμένο χρόνο. Ως κάτι που ποιήθηκε μέσα από τις δράσεις όλων εκείνων που εποίησαν την αναπαράσταση του θεατρικού έργου. Δηλαδή τους «ηθοποιούς». Και αναφέρομαι εδώ, στους «ηθοποιούς», που το Σάββατο το βράδυ, στις 8 Μαΐου 2010, κατασκεύασαν και βίωσαν για δύο ώρες ήθος, στο οποίο συγχρόνως μας κοινωνήσαν μέσα από τους λόγους, τα σώματά τους, τις πρακτικές τους.

² <http://topostheatrou.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/blog-post.html>.

In his thesis *Bringing Together Theory and Practice: The Director as Teacher in Academic Theatre* Sean Kelly supports the idea that a director should be a teacher if s/he wants to reach the high standards required of a successful production:

One would hope that directors in theatre would have some training in teaching, or at the very least, be taught the necessity of using the stage and a production as one of many teaching tools. (Kelly, 2009: 11)

Kelly proposes the idea of creating an academic course on how a director could also learn the skills of a teacher. Although few, there are currently directors who are also called ‘teachers’ - the previously mentioned Charles C. Koon, for example, and Arianne Mnouchkin. Charles C. Coon was a classroom teacher and he put on TiS performances at the Athens College in the late 1930s. I am not suggesting that when a classroom teacher puts on a TiS play with his/her students it automatically makes him/her a director, but it is clear from the examples of Koon and Tzamarias that classroom teachers *can* become successful directors. How is this duality of skills achieved? What elements do teachers need to direct the school play? Neither Koon nor Tzamarias took particular lessons in a directing school. How are the elements of directing theatre taught? What processes do classroom teachers use when making theatre with their students?

2.8. Classroom Teacher as Director

In directing the school play, the teacher has full responsibility for the production. Katerina and Petros, directors at School A and School B respectively, constantly repeated “We are responsible and we would bear the blame if it’s not a success.” (Fieldnotes, 2010). They took on full responsibility, not just for the success or

failings of the performance, but for the costumes; the music; the lighting; blocking the scenes; cutting and, when necessary, merging lines and roles and teaching students their roles¹. According to Kelly (2009) a teacher and a director have a lot in common: they guide the students, make them self-sufficient and “prepare the students by providing them with the knowledge and experience they need in order to perform to the best of their abilities.” (Kelly, 2009: 10).

Jonathan Cole, a professor in the Theatre Department at Oregon University, Canada, claims that, to direct a play in an artistically successful manner, a director’s role should be simultaneously split between mentoring students and directing them. At both the TiS productions I studied, T/Ds did not simply direct the plays but they taught students about theatre. Students kept asking questions such as, “How do I do that?”, “How should I say that?”, “Will you show me what to do?” . The teacher/director taught them theatre terminology, how to build a character and how to stand on the stage.² Where did they get their directing knowledge from? Where did they acquire their theatre-teaching techniques? Does the fact that they might have attended some theatrical seminars make them competent enough to direct a play and teach students about theatre?

There is a need for research into the precise conditions of directing the senior high school play because “there is no hard evidence to confirm precisely how a [classroom teacher] directs.” (Cole, 2008:192). Such information is not available, nor is it captured through empirical study or survey. The only available accounts are those of musical theatre directors (Binnema, 1998, Paterson Mark, 2009) where we can discern

¹ I will talk about this in the Teacher as Director section.

² I will speak extensively about this in the analysis chapter.

some directing methodology. This is not wholly relevant to the Greek context I am examining however, as in the aforementioned accounts, the directing is carried out by the specialist teacher – the musician - and not the generalist teacher as happens in Greek schools.

However, Isabel Luton (2010), in her thesis exploring the directing of school plays by classroom teachers in New Zealand, supports the idea that a teacher should never forget his/her educational goal when s/he directs the students. She continues by saying that professional directors have the same responsibility, although she recognises the fact that they may not have the same requirements and constraints. To be a director, she says:

... requires far more than organising on the stage and expecting [the actors] to learn lines. It requires a high degree of vision, understanding, creativity and patience. Perhaps this is not so far removed from the role of the teacher in the classroom. (Luton, 2010:51).

A teacher who has taken the role of director not only has to find ways to teach skills of performance; blocking; movement; choreography¹ (in the case of School B); dance² (in the case of School A), but also (or should) acts as a student where:

S/he always studies, struggles, questions and tries to learn every time the new language that is unveiled to her / him from each text and from the theatre praxis itself. This is the most interesting thing for the director: to speak in an almost unknown language and to manage to communicate in this language. His/her relationship with the actors can be one of teacher-student, if this is what the actor wants. The director, reminds me of the mountain guide who says: “Let’s go this way, I read that it is interesting; or let’s go that way, I’ve been there before, and you will like it”. What the actor, or the student, will see there depends on him. Is not up to the director, or up to the teacher, to tell him/her what to see. (Martha Fritzila, interview, 4th June 2013³)

¹ A planned, artistic, form of movements usually accompanied by a music theme.

² Usually a traditional piece of dance work.

³ Ο σκηνοθέτης εν δυνάμει είναι και δάσκαλος. Εκεί έγκειται το ενδιαφέρον; Ο σκηνοθέτης είναι και μαθητής. Μελετά, πολεμά, αμφισβητεί και προσπαθεί να μάθει κάθε φορά την καινούργια γλώσσα που του αποκαλύπτεται από τα κείμενα και από την ίδια την θεατρική πράξη. Το

Dietrich and Duckwall (1983) in their book *Play Direction* likened the work of the director to that of the teacher. They go so far as to state that the director has to be a “superior teacher” (Dietrich, 1983:14) and that s/he has to take full responsibility for the whole process. “The school ... theatre attests to the fact that [teachers]/directors are successfully imparting their knowledge to enthusiastic young people.” (*ibid*: 29). The authors believe that good directing is teaching and the director is the centre of the production, connecting all of its other aspects: playwright, students/actors, parents, musicians and the audience. T/Ds in the cases I investigated had another responsibility: to take into consideration the local educational and community authorities as they played an essential role in the two production processes. Local authorities provided the town halls in which the plays were performed, so that anyone interested in what happens in local secondary schools could attend.

January M. Akselrad (2010) in her book *Classroom Teacher as Theater Director: Or ... I Have to Put on a Play?!* gives instructions on exactly what the title suggests, referring just to primary schools. The same task is attempted by the teachers’ book distributed by the MINEDU¹. What I want to achieve at the end of this thesis is to provide school teachers with a framework that they will feel free to adapt in creating their own approaches to the work, using elements of the work done by colleagues in other, but analogous, school contexts.

ενδιαφέρον του σκηνοθέτη είναι πάνω απ' όλα αυτό. Να μιλήσει αυτήν την σχεδόν άγνωστη γλώσσα και να καταφέρει να επικοινωνήσει σε αυτήν την γλώσσα. Η σχέση του τώρα με τους ηθοποιούς μπορεί να είναι και σχέση δασκάλου – μαθητή, αν αυτό επιθυμεί ο ηθοποιός. Ο σκηνοθέτης περισσότερο μου θυμίζει τους οδηγούς στις ορειβάσιες ή τις εκδρομές που λέει: “Πάμε από δώ, διάβασα πως έχει ενδιαφέρον ή πάμε απο κει, έχω ξαναπάει,θα σας αρέσει.” Το τι θα δει ο ηθοποιός ή ο μαθητής εκεί, είναι δικό του θέμα. Δεν θα του πει ο σκηνοθέτης τι θα δει, ούτε κι ο δάσκαλος.
http://www.onlytheater.gr/magic_bus/synentefkseis/2742-martha-frintzila-na-diavasoume-evripidi.html

¹ The Greek Ministry of Education.

I will finish this part of the literary references to teacher as director with a personal statement made by an English language teacher. He was returning home after a very tiring day in which he had taught for several hours and then directed the school play as an extracurricular activity. He was asking himself whether he would direct another play after the current one:

Tired as I was, I knew at that moment that I would direct another play next year and many plays for many years to come. Why? Because directing theatre is a natural, complementary action to teaching English. The English teacher is already familiar with literary quality, characterisation and motivation, plot, and many other facets of drama, and possesses a facility with language. In many ways I am a better teacher, both in terms of understanding the high school mind and heart and better understanding my subject matter, than I would have been without theatre. There are certainly challenges though - challenges that shouldn't be underestimated or unappreciated - but the rewards are such that the overall emotion is a real sense of joy and accomplishment. Interestingly, the boundary between the sacrifices and rewards is so blurred that it is hard to tell where the sacrifices end and the rewards begin. (Ridgway, 1986:50)

Directing the school play was a natural process to him but this might not be the case for all the T/Ds who assume responsibility for putting on a school production, either as a co-curricular or as an extracurricular or curricular activity¹. Ridgway talked about the English language teacher who is familiar with characterisation, plot and literacy. What about a teacher from a different specialist area who undertakes the task? For instance two of the teachers I observed, Petros from School B and Sophia from School A, were not language teachers, but economics and physics teachers respectively. Would that make them unsuited to teach and direct the school play? One way to find out is to follow them into the rehearsal room - not to pre-judge but to analyse and interpret

¹ I explained it on page 33.

the framework they applied to their students there: “the site where major changes in the direction of the theatre practice can be located”¹ (Fitzpatrick, 2006).

2.9. Rehearsals

Having staged a number of school performances myself over many years, have shown that the true essence of any theatre encounter is to be found in the rehearsal room. Rehearsal has not been given the attention it merits. Professional rehearsals have been labelled a “hidden world” or a “closed doors’ area”, that is, a private area which cannot be easily accessed by a stranger/a researcher/an outsider (Cole, 1998, Rossmanith 2003). Would this be so with school theatre rehearsals?

First, I looked at literary reference materials to see if there had been any accounts of rehearsal analysis in the field of school theatre. There were few, and those that I found centred on other kinds of school performances – typically concerts or musical events. An important related work is Tina Binnema’s thesis *Secondary School Musical: A Critical View*, which looks in detail at the rehearsal practices of five secondary school teachers involved in musical theatre in schools in USA. For Binnema, the rehearsal is a very important area where theatre values can be explored and analysed. She believes that in rehearsals, theatre techniques and methods are revealed: “the way drama is currently taught can be found in rehearsals of secondary school musicals” (1986:33).

¹ Proposed name and function of the Research Cluster: “Re-thinking Theatre History: The Impact of Rehearsal” organised by Fitzpatrick, P. (2006) in Melbourne Australia.
<http://confluence.arts.uwa.edu.au/display/THEATRE/Home> where you can find this citation in the application form made by Fitzpatrick in order to get funding for the conference.

Stephanie Pitts is a senior lecturer in music at the University of Sheffield, where she directs the distance learning MA in Psychology for musicians. In her article, *“Anything goes: a case study of extra-curricular musical participation in an English secondary school”*, she states that documenting and investigating extra-curricular musical activities is rare in research literature, despite their value in enriching students’ understanding and engagement with music and education. Pitts refers to Peter Woods’ study of a school production of *Godspell*, as a “rare exception” (Pitts, 2007: 4).

Since I could not discover any literary accounts of rehearsal in the school theatre field, I decided to strengthen my theoretical background by looking into accounts of rehearsals in professional theatre¹. I draw on Kakoudaki (2006) who regards Greek school theatre as a process similar to the professional form. My initial thought was to see how rehearsal accounts have been conducted, how they have been structured, whether I could apply the findings to school theatre rehearsals and, if so, how. But I realised that in my attempts to analyse and interpret TiS rehearsals, I had to adapt and adjust the professional approaches to match the characteristics of TiS. The contexts and the aims of the two placements conducted for this research are different from, but analogous to, the professional ones (see Table 1).

¹ Since school theatre performances can be likened to professional ones (Kakoudaki, 2006), I decided to treat TiS as a form of theatre art in its own right.

Table 1.

	School Production	Theatre	Professional Production
Macro-community	Society (school theatre festivals)		Society (touring, local festivals)
Micro-community	Parents, local and municipal authorities		Local and municipal authorities
Constituency groups	Local Educational Authorities		Ministry of Culture-Theatre Department
Rehearsal Location	School		Theatre Company
Overseen by	Director	Teacher ¹	Director
Participants	Students		Trained actors
Performed for	Audience		Audience

There are some profound differences between the two aforementioned placements. Firstly, the TiS production would not earn money for the participants. Secondly, students were not trained actors, nor had their directors been trained. Thirdly, professional theatre and TiS are run very differently: professional theatre (apart from the National Theatre) is mainly run by private companies or organisations whereas TiS is subject to student, school and Local Educational Authority restrictions on the type of play selected, with the chosen approach to be appropriate to meet students' abilities.

There are two works that attracted my attention. The first is Kate Rossmanith's (2003) book "Making Theatre Making: Rehearsal Practice and Cultural Production". Reading the book helped me to shape my work and to realise what needed to be written about rehearsals. Rossmanith, analyses day-to-day micro-practices and how the practitioners understood them. She intended to develop a methodology which other scholars could follow to study rehearsal practices. I found, however, that I was unable to

¹ In this thesis a teacher is considered as a director putting on a school production.

follow her methodology in every aspect because her work focuses on the director/actor relationship during rehearsals and my focus was mainly on the teacher/director. That said, her work did help me to analyse mine. For instance, I realised how the day-to-day micro-practices of rehearsal are intimately connected to broader macro-institutional/societal contexts. For example, I have explored how scenes in rehearsals, about immigration or political corruption, were closely caught up in ideas about what it is to experience these things in real life. Immigration and financial corruption were very real concerns for the wider Greek society at the time of rehearsal, and even now remain real problems. The ‘inner’ situation of both plays aligned with the ‘inner’ condition of society.

Another book I found perhaps more relevant to what I was researching is Davis Fewster’s (2001) “*A Rehearsal Analysis of the Production of The Blind Giant is Dancing by Neil Armfield and the Company B Ensemble*” which focuses on the director’s approach to putting on the play. Fewster states that analysing a theatre group’s work is implicitly to analyse the director’s practice itself. Fewster states that the work of a director can be examined on at least three levels:

... the effect of the institutionalised structure that the director works within; the director's division of time and labour; and third the strategies that the director behaviourally embodies in rehearsal to achieve the transformation of the play to the stage. (Fewster, 2001:14-15)

The three levels for the TiS performances I observed can be considered as follows:

a. *The effect of the institutional choices made before rehearsal*

What effect did the ‘institution’ - in this case the school and local and regional school authorities - have on creative decisions prior to the start of the whole process? For example all the T/Ds had to decide when they would hold the rehearsals. For two reasons they decided to hold them out of school hours. Firstly, they did not want to interrupt the school curriculum and have students miss lessons. This seemed to be very important because Petros, one of the directors in School B, drew attention in his opening night speech to the fact that “We have not used school hours to stage the play” (Petros, 2nd May 2010). Secondly, on Saturdays both teachers and students could dedicate more hours to rehearsal as it is a non-school day. They used the institution’s facilities – rooms, space, desks, chairs and the animate material i.e. the students - without exploiting them. In return, the institution benefits from supporting the venture: teachers become positive role models for their colleagues, students for their peers and the school’s reputation is enhanced in the community.

b. *The structuring of the rehearsal schedule*

What approaches would the teacher/directors follow in taking the play ‘from page to stage’? Would there be text readings? Then walkthroughs? Blocking scenes? Improvisations? Straight guidance – must and must nots? Or would rehearsal time be used in other ways?

c. *The ‘atmosphere’ and the ‘rhythm’ of the rehearsal*

As the dominant figure in guiding the production to performance, the teacher/director would also be responsible for establishing the atmosphere of the rehearsal room, the “climate in which the play [would] grow”, the “creative state”

which would reflect his (*sic*), the director's, own 'creative state' of mind". (Benedetti 1985: 110).

How much 'laughter' would he allow for example? How much 'room' for the actors would he allow to solve "their own creative problems"? How 'collaborative' would he be? How much would teachers/directors dictate and prescribe to the student/actors their understanding of the play and what action they should enact? (Fewster, 2001:16)

Fewster's book helped me to realise that creating a framework and not a 'bible' for the ideal director would be more useful and well received by the school and theatre-in-school community.

I will draw on accounts of professional theatre rehearsals in order to create a backdrop and explain a *model* for TiS rehearsals.

2.9.1. Insider Accounts on Rehearsal

Rehearsal accounts by practitioners about their work come in the form of interviews; short articles where actors or directors reflect on particular rehearsal processes; practitioners writing about their specific working approach and lengthy casebooks where directors and actors document the daily work of rehearsal by following a specific process. Overall, while this material offers insights into the usually private sanctum of rehearsal, it does not necessarily extend to examining or describing the minutiae of what actually occurs over the weeks and even months of a rehearsal process.

Since at least the early 1960s, some theatre and performance journals – notably *The Drama Review (TDR)* and *New Theatre Quarterly (NTQ)* – have regularly published interviews with practitioners, the emphasis here being on finding out about the working process either of a specific production or general practice. The sense of these pieces is *journalistic* rather than *academic*, as the interviews elicit personal ideas

from practitioners without any critical analysis or explicit theoretical framework. In 1963, the editors of TDR interviewed Herbert Blau about his production of *King Lear* for an Actors' Workshop (Blau 1963). They asked Blau how, during rehearsals, he made the actors aware of the dark world of the play. Blau replied:

By various objective and subliminal means, including the *mise en scene* and music. But, to begin with, we read the text carefully and looked over our own world ... Affective memory of the larger traumas is important, but what we also looked for was the subtler fault, the thing you do and don't mean to do, the psychopathology of everyday life, the suicidal trap in our more conventional behaviour, that little slip of will that becomes deadly. (Blau, 1963:125).

This interview is representative of the style and format of all the interviews with practitioners: they are encouraged to reflect on their rehearsal approach. Rather than provide details of working hours or production pragmatics (for instance space, money), the information concentrates on practitioners' attitudes to rehearsing and performing (for further interviews, see also Robertson 1964; Schachner and Lee 1964; Carlson 1967; Kellman 1976; Pegnato 1981; Champagne 1981; Allen 1986; Fera1989).

In all these works, the emphasis is on providing systematic accounts of theatre processes or on finding ways to theorise practice which usually is not witnessed by the public. This is most apparent in the way that interesting stories or comments are foregrounded over what might be seen as the more mundane dimension of practice. In fact, the articles are not unlike the sort of publicity pieces published in Arts' sections of newspapers when a production is due to open. For instance, in 2001, there were a number of pieces published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* specifically about the rehearsals of upcoming performances (see McDonald 2001; Jinman 2001; Adamson

2001). Here the reader, or in this case the prospective spectator, is allowed a seductive, behind-the-scenes glimpse of theatre practitioners at work.

Approaches used by practitioners who write about their own working methods differ from the short interview-based format in that their writing involves a more intense degree of reflection and rigour. These writers have spent time organising their thinking and structuring the material. However, as in the interviews, many assumptions are made about rehearsal procedures, and there is an emphasis on directors' or actors' methodologies rather than, for instance, the day-to-day workings of a rehearsal room.

In the first part of the twentieth century, a number of significant directors were engaged, to differing extents, in documenting their own practices: Andre Antoine, Konstantin Stanislavski, Edward Gordon Craig, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Jacques Copeau, Max Reinhardt, Erwin Piscator, Bertolt Brecht and Jerzy Grotowski (see Bradby and Williams 1988; Cole and Krich Chinoy 1966). Brecht, who was especially interested in the rehearsal process, outlined what he saw as the fifteen "Phases of a Production" from analysing the play, through to "reading" rehearsal, "positioning" rehearsal, and finally opening night (Willet 1964:240-2). He documented some of his staging solutions by taking a photographic record, and then turned to documenting rehearsals themselves using stenographic records and, in the case of rehearsals for *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1953-4), through audio recordings (Fuegi 1987: 132).

Writings by contemporary directors include those by Peter Brook and Robert Benedetti. Brook's comments on rehearsal provide an important guide to his directorial approach: "Rehearsal work should create a climate in which the actors feel free to produce everything they can bring to the play." (Brook, 1988:3). While not all directors focus solely on rehearsal, they do provide general theatre approaches and the writings are therefore potentially useful for anyone interested in rehearsal. More specific

methods are offered by Robert Benedetti with his book *The Director at Work* (1985) in which he provides a work book for would-be directors. The Australian director Rex Cramphorn was rigorous in developing and, to a certain extent, theorising his own practice. His paper “L’Illusion Comique to Theatrical Illusion: Textual Changes for Performance” (in McAuley, 1987:59-71) documents how and why he made changes to the French play text in his 1978 production.

While the literary field of rehearsal analysis is dominated by directors, Simon Callow’s book *Being an Actor* (1995) is a notable exception. The writing is not a systematic reflection of working practice in, say, the way that Benedetti or Cramphorn offer. However, it certainly departs from memoir in that, rather than map a personal history, Callow “give[s] an account of the whole experience of an actor – not merely the career, but the psychological and emotional circumstances in which we find ourselves: what it’s like to be an actor, externally and internally.” (Callow, 1995: xiii). Callow tells anecdotes about rehearsal throughout the first two-thirds of the book, and in the last part he briefly charts chronologically (“Day One”, “Day Two” etc) his journey through a typical rehearsal process. Towards the end of the book he amalgamates many theatre experiences into what he sees as the typical characteristics of each stage of the process.

While all this work provides insights, it does not address actual practice or the pragmatics of rehearsal work. For example, Brook writes “The final stages of rehearsal are very important, because at that moment you push and encourage the actor to discard all that is superfluous, to edit and tighten” (Brook, 1988: 4). While this is partly revealing of Brook’s approach, it does not extend into how this philosophy is actually embodied. It lies with the reader to imagine the minutiae of the execution of such an approach.

Rehearsal monographs¹ by directors and actors about specific rehearsal processes depart from the material discussed thus far in that they address rehearsal at the level of daily practice rather than a more general examination of ideas or approaches to rehearsing and performing. These monograph accounts also differ from the short articles in that they involve a sustained engagement with the rehearsal process and, importantly, a written document reflecting such a time. However, as may be expected, these writers concentrate on their own processes, and therefore they produce very particular orders of knowledge². A well-known account by a director about his own process is Max Stafford-Clark's *Letters to George* (1989) where he documents his work on the production of *The Recruiting Officer* and *Our Country's Good*.

Directors rarely document their own specific rehearsals and for this reason Stafford-Clark's account is unusual. Stafford-Clark, because he structures the book through a series of letters to the dead playwright, George Farquhar (he opens each entry with "Dear George"), offers a sustained first-hand insight into a director/playwright relationship during a rehearsal period.

Stanislavski, also, "documented his own process and while the material does not provide rehearsal accounts *per se*, it does offer insights into his working method" (McAuley, 1998:75). Stanislavski sought for naturalism in his rehearsals, that is the "external aspects of the individual, his/her utterances, behaviour and appearance in everyday setting" and which "gives a privileged access to personal and collective realities" (Williams R, 1971:277). Naturalism was looking at "the 'slice of lifethe flow of action and acting, of representation and performance.'" (Williams, 1975: 24) Dramatics from Ibsen onwards, created rooms on enclosed stages. It is like in *Fairytale*,

¹ Detailed studies on rehearsals.

² Focus on one specific aspect of rehearsal.

where the 'enclosed' characters – King and Queen – “waited for the knock on the door to know what happen to them”(ibid)

All T/Ds tried to bring the characters as close to the playwrights' description on the internal and external characteristics. Read the following expert from the rehearsals.

Make me feel that the Admiral feels weak and disappointed; I want a powerful Spiros (student plays double role) ...

I want Paris as he already is ... I do not want any change in him. Good articulation, open up and performance me your emotions, make me understand that you¹ are the father. (adult role)

You, (she turns to the student who plays his daughter) make me feel that you are worried about your father's condition ... You fall for Yiorgos ... There has to be a differentiation in these two conditions in terms of how you express them. I see Maria saying her lines: that your father is unfairly imprisoned but it does not come out that you are worrying, the worrying of a daughter for her father ... you are his daughter, you see your father under the gallows ... at that time you 'cracked' inside ... Father is staring at you ... he gives 'it' to you ... take 'it' ...

As for (student's real name) I have nothing to comment on her ... I am very satisfied ... I think you 'keep' it (adult role) really well ...

The king has no problem at all ... I just do not want him constantly shouting ... In the last rehearsal when I told you that at this particular moment in the play you 'crack', I do not want just to hear the words 'I am moved' but I want to understand that you felt it, make me feel it too ... For example when Yiorgia cries, and by the way the cry is very good, you do not have to do it in Yiorgia's way ... you are a man, you are a king and you 'crack' for the first time ever.

Prince, I want you to expel the child in you and become a serious young man (adult role).

Student laughs out of embarrassment.

Guys, it is you that support the play, you are the pillars of the play. The play, the soul of the play, is not the cues, the lines ... (phone rings, she talks on the phone)

Students make jokes and fun of each other...someone says 'it's being recorded, it's being recorded' (aware of recording).

She continues to speak about the prince but this time she calls him by his real name

(Student's name), did you understand me? Did you understand what I want? I want to 'hear' the man, I want to 'see' the man ...

She turns to another student. She calls her by her real name. This female student plays two male adults.

Nikoleta you are the barber, make me feel that you are a veteran in the army...I do not want you just to speak your lines, now I want to see your emotions: disappointment, bravery, shame, pessimism, disdain ... I do not know ... find it and show it to me.

Michael, you are not bad...although your main role is in the music ensemble ² I like the fighting scene - you both are very good.

¹ Emphasis is mine.

² This particular student had a double role. He played a character but he was part of the music ensemble that played live music during the performance.

Student: *He takes revenge on me*

Two outlaws (Adult male roles portrayed by female teen students.)

This man has dragged you into illegality now (She turns to the other outlaw) she considers you a laggard ...

Foreman (another girl playing an adult male), you are very good (she refers to her as male)¹ I do not want to make any change in you ... just learn your lines

Student: *I have ...*

The Judge you are very good but do not squeal ... you can impose yourself on the court without squealing; though ... you can shout, you do not need to squeal ...

Poormother: welcome Poormother (she calls her by her character name) we were saying what we want [for the characters] ... what we want is to let ourselves go, so we do, and we let out our emotions ... it is not just love you feel for (student's name) ... but also the emotional support for your brother ... He is your brother, not your enemy ... nor a random acquaintance ...

(Transcript of rehearsals, 12th March 2010).

What Katerina tried to invoke from S/As was what Stanislavski called the subconscious drive. Stanislavski's naturalism depends upon the imitation of life. Katerina wanted S/A to believe that they are watching realistically people walking around in acceptably convincing reproductions of the landscapes and interiors of simulated places

Just as Stafford-Clark's casebook and Stanislavski's writing are rare directors' accounts, Anthony Sher's *Year of The King* (1995) provides an actor's account of rehearsal (see also Cox 1992). Unlike Simon Callow who summarises the rehearsal experience, Sher takes the reader through his day-to-day working processes by way of a diary he wrote during the year he worked on *Richard III*. As in Callow's book, however, the writing not only concentrates on craft but the full experience, with much time devoted to the psychological and emotional journey of the actor. Sher's account of playing Richard III is interlaced with accounts of his therapy sessions. Similarly, the language Callow uses is experiential with a distinct emphasis on how it feels to be an actor (the book's title, *Being an Actor*, unquestionably reflects this).

¹ In the Greek language the suffix for male and female nouns denote the sex. So the reader or the viewer or the listener can distinguish the sex by the suffixes.

This orientation, actors' perspectives in the rehearsal room, features far less in Stafford-Clark's writing. These two different orientations reflect the distinct viewpoints of directors and actors more generally. The directors write about their approaches and how to deal with actors, while the actors often concentrate on their *own* journey and experiences (this distinction is also quite obvious with the participants in the work undertaken for this thesis).

Consequently, an actor's account will often prioritise sensations - one order of knowledge - over what they see as production details, another order of knowledge. Actor Bill Wallis's casebook for NTQ includes a disclaimer "My view of the production will be impressionist rather than coolly coherent" (Wallis, 1971:83). The distinction between the way that directors write and think and the way that actors write and think is important since the literature written about and by directors far outweighs the material written about and by actors.

A very useful book to look upon is Mike Alfred's *Different Every Night* (2007) which is the culmination of a personal journey in the theatre. With his book Alfred takes us to the rehearsal room, something that Stanislavski has also done. He describes in detail the methodology an actor applies in order to bring the page on stage and more importantly how an actor keeps up his/her interest all the way through the performances, for as long the play runs. Based on his own productions, he demonstrates practical advice on a wide range of techniques and examples on how to mount a performance.

Robert Leach's *Theatre Studies: The Basics* (2013) is another incisive account of contemporary theatre studies. His view is, that in the rehearsal room 'reading through' round the table, blocking the scenes, marking the movements on the floor, learning the lines are the ingredients of good rehearsals. Directors in the process of

building a character should remember Stanislavski's "... dictum and look for the bad in good, or the jolly in the depressing" (Leach, 2013:155). The jolly moments in *Suitcase* and *Fairytale* rehearsals were generated from the awkwardness S/As felt during 'love' scenes or even from improvisational exercises.

Accounts by directors cannot be said to reflect accurately practices for both directors and actors. Also, the accounts discussed so far are written by insiders who are not only practitioners but are also directly involved in the production. Consequently, whilst the reader may gain a sense of what it's like to be a director or an actor in rehearsal, these writers do not provide alternative perspectives. In fact, the differences between directors' and actors' writings emphasise the extent to which practitioners concentrate on their own experiences as opposed to a wider perspective.

So far, this section has explicitly suggested that insiders can provide special knowledge and general ideas of what it is like to direct or act, but this knowledge rarely extends to the description of daily practice or to the detailed pragmatics of production. Just because a practitioner may be directly involved in the theatre rehearsal process (and, therefore, seemingly at the centre of that process), it does not necessarily make the work transparent to that practitioner. That is, the common sense dimension of rehearsal is indeed so obvious to practitioners – it constitutes the very blocks on which rehearsals are built and sustained – that it has, in a sense, disappeared from the view of the directors and actors.

2.9.2. Outsider Accounts of Rehearsal

If being inside theatre productions does not necessarily make practitioners authorities on their own methods and processes, how have outside observers written

about theatre rehearsal? Articles by writers observing rehearsal monographs and collections of rehearsal material, all start to access the sort of common sense details that insiders invariably overlook. Overall, the descriptions of practice and of the production machine are more developed. However, the onus is on these writers to make their agendas explicit. This not only is central to questions of methodology but also the implicit and explicit questions that frame any given project, the context in which the rehearsals have taken place, that is the micro and macro practices of rehearsals.

Surprisingly, while theatre rehearsal has not been theorised to any real extent by European or North American academics, various writers have been writing about it from as early as 1971. *Theatre Quarterly (TQ)*, in its very first edition, published what they termed a “production casebook” which concentrated on the rehearsals of a specific production. These casebook studies continued to be a feature of the journal in the first twenty-two editions until 1976. So, for five years, *TQ* made a sustained commitment to documenting some of what went on in rehearsals¹. The actual methodology adopted by the *TQ*’s writers raises important questions regarding what it is to be involved in rehearsal.

The editors of *TQ* asked practitioners to keep diaries during their rehearsals: the casebooks were based on information drawn from an actor or assistant director directly involved in the production. Then, usually, an outside writer would help the practitioner organise the material for the journal. Rather than providing a single story or trajectory, these studies are a collection of excerpts from the playtext, directors’ comments,

¹ Since *TQ*, there has not been a theatre or performance journal devoted specifically to rehearsal; however individual articles have been published. These range from offering a brief chronological casebook (see Rayment 1982), to focusing on the director’s work (see Trousdell 1986, 1991; Harrison 1986; Minchinton 1998), to documenting the company’s work (see Arratia 1992; Lyons 1999). As might be expected, these articles deal with high-profile directors and companies, for instance, Giorgio Strehler, Peter Sellars, the Wooster Group, and the Berliner Ensemble. These individual articles differ from the *TQ* casebooks since, due to the sustained commitment to documenting rehearsals over a period of five years, there was an opportunity for less well-known groups to have their work recorded.

rehearsal schedules, a history of the particular theatre company, casting decisions, correspondence between actors and directors, and so on. The work is reminiscent of archive material not yet organised or structured.

This is not to say that it is not insightful, for a reader is certainly introduced to some of the layers of production business, the many people involved in the creative decision-making, as well as some of those decisions themselves. However, the research approach adopted by *TQ* largely accounts for the sort of piecemeal nature of the records collected.

As director Peter Cheesman bluntly puts it:

The Editors of *Theatre Quarterly* approached me for suggestions for possible casebook studies of production and I expressed my personal distaste at the inevitably pretentious tome these seem to acquire. I know no professional director who keeps a diary of his thoughts and plans, as the circumstances under which most of us work in British professional theatres are frantic, with short rehearsal periods of four, three or even two weeks. There is simply no time for the luxury of reflection – often even for the luxury of planning. Rehearsal time is the most expensive commodity in the theatre. (Cheesman, 1971:86).

The sort of material published in these casebooks, and the organisation of said material, also highlights the lack of explicit agendas at work for the *TQ*'s writers. Put simply, there were no obvious questions driving the collation of such information. That said, because *TQ*'s editors' interest in rehearsal documentation stretched over many years (in the professional field), writers of rehearsal accounts gradually became interested in more direct lines of inquiry. Gary O' Connor, assistant director of Arnold Wesker's *The Friends*, writes that he edited his account "on the basis of the question, should an author direct his own play?" (O'Connor, 1971:78); Bill Wallis and Ed Wilson (1972) are two actors who concentrate on what it is like to rehearse in a new theatre with a new theatre company, thereby highlighting institutional concerns.

Theatre and Drama Review (TDR) was also interested in documenting rehearsal, however, unlike *TQ*, it was very much driven by a set of clear questions. In 1974, *TDR* published a “Rehearsal Procedure Issue”, where observers attended rehearsals of various productions. In the editorial the editor, Michael Kirby, is clear about the aim of the journal issue:

We chose five of the most important and innovative contemporary theatres and have attempted to investigate their working methods with the assumption that new types of performance are being developed through new procedures and techniques. (Kirby, 1974:7).

The writers offer brief histories of each of the performance groups and then provide a summary of the rehearsal processes (see Ryder Ryan, 1974; Deak, 1974). The articles in the *TDR* issue are written by observers and are oriented differently to *TQ* as they are interested in how the rehearsal research informs performance choices. The editor is explicit about the writers’ aims: “It was also hoped that study of the creative process would be another way to document the performances themselves – that, among other things, it would clarify certain pervasive qualities and stylistic aspects of the work.” (*TDR*, 1974:7).

In a way, the work¹ is less concerned with rehearsal being a legitimate field for research and more interested in accumulating further insights into performance. This is why *TQ*’s material is potentially so interesting: it marks the start of research into rehearsals in their own right rather than as a means to gather information to inform performance decisions.

Earlier I discussed monographs by directors and actors, but there are accounts by observers as well. Due to the relative impartiality of these specific writers, or at least

¹ The work described in *TDR*.

their distance from the production, these accounts are detailed and provide contexts that an insider might be unable to offer. Peter Brook has welcomed certain observers into some of his rehearsal processes and casebooks of productions have been published. Perhaps the best known is David Selbourne's *The Making of A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1972), which documents Brook's famous 1970 production (see also Smith 1972; Heilpern, 1977).

Selbourne is methodical in his writing and the reader is offered insight into the day-to-day working process of a director and, to a lesser extent, actors. Because he is an observer and not a director or an actor, Selbourne is careful to document and explain particular exercises and exchanges that insider accounts tend not to reveal. He writes of the first day of rehearsals:

The play is to be read for the first time, squatting. And since, today, only the 'mechanicals' are present, they will take all the parts between them. Brook tells them that "the associations, the lines, the correspondences" must be "searched out", in order to "enlarge and intensify the text's meaning". Flicking through his copy, he instances Titania's "And this same progeny of evil comes, from our debate, from our dissension". This, he says, anticipates both theme and mood of the play's coda. The actors are silent and burdened; their reading cautious. (Selbourne, 1982: 5).

Here Selbourne actually documents Brook's directions and the actors' responses, rather than, say, explaining Brook's ideas, about what rehearsal should be. Jim Hiley's *Theatre at Work* (1981) is an account of the National Theatre Company's production of *Galileo* and, like Selbourne's work, is detailed with dense descriptions.

These casebook accounts tend to focus on the work of the director. For instance, Simon Trussler's introduction to Selbourne's work is in fact a biography of Peter Brook, and the back cover summary advertises the book as "a writer's unique account of the imaginative processes of a director of genius". Even the subtitle of the book is *An Eye-Witness Account of Peter Brook's Production from First Rehearsal to First Night*.

Similarly, Hiley's account concentrates on the director, John Dexter, with Chapter One finishing on the dramatic statement "John Dexter was back" (1981:12), and the whole of Chapter Two is devoted to a history of Dexter. This focus on the directors does not diminish the insights provided by these observer/writers, but it is important to foreground the specific agendas and therefore what aspects of rehearsal are perhaps overlooked: for instance, actors' physical work.

However, Hiley, unlike Selbourne, also provides a context for the production machine and the workings of the National Theatre as it attempts to put on a production. For instance, it is significant that the first account of rehearsals with actors does not appear until page fifty seven of the book. In the introduction he explains, "I attended production meetings and rehearsals, and was allowed to roam unchaperoned the corridors, workshops and offices of the National probing what was happening or just soaking up the atmosphere." (*ibid*: x). Hiley asked questions such as "How was the National organised and what sort of place was it to work?" (*ibid*). This interest in the institutional workings, implied in the book's subtitle, *The Story of the National Theatre's production of Brecht's Galileo*, is one of the areas where a rehearsal observer is, strategically speaking, better placed to engage in analysis, whereas a practitioner, caught up in the actual rehearsing, could not spare the time or attain the distance to describe such details.

As well as the rehearsal monographs, there are several texts by academics who deal with acting theories and practice, in which rehearsal is couched in anecdotes and asides rather than being foregrounded in any way. Cole and Krich Chinoy's (eds) collection, *Actors on Acting* (1975) provides an historical account, beginning in Ancient Greece with the artists of Dionysus and moving through different eras. They draw on

interviews, manifestos and meditations on acting to create an overview of some of the attitudes and approaches to acting in the Western tradition.

Delgado's and Heritage's (eds.) *In Contact With the Gods* (1996) is a collection of interviews with directors, and the overarching question driving the book involves defining the director's role. Again, as in *Actors in Acting*, rehearsal is mentioned sporadically as the texts address general reflections on practice. Similarly, Donkin and Clement's (eds.), *Upstaging Big Daddy* (1993) also provides a collection of practitioners' accounts of their own working processes. Luere and Berger (eds.), in their book *The Theatre Team* (1988) extend beyond director and actor practice and offer a collection of definitions of some of the roles in producing theatre (for instance, "The Producer"). Like the other collections, this book draws largely on interviews with practitioners, and is useful in that it provides a wider view of the theatre machine.

None of these collections is especially theoretical. There is an absence of critical analysis and they do not deal with rehearsal especially. Two texts that do not concentrate on rehearsal but do offer productive ways to theorise actor practice are Joseph Roach's *The Player's Passion* (1986) and Phillip Zarrilli's *Acting (Re)Considered* (1995). They will contribute extensively to my project by consciously interrogating the discourses surrounding Western acting practice and, in particular, the constructions of body and selfhood that are invoked by practitioners.

Both Schomit Mitter and Susan Letzler Cole (2001) have written lengthy studies on rehearsal and, unlike the other academic writing discussed thus far, they deal with very specific theatre rehearsals. In their work, Mitter and Cole are direct about their aims; however they are less clear in questioning the methodology of their research approach and the implicit critical frameworks they are bringing to the project.

More specifically, Mitter, in *Systems of Rehearsal* (1992), compares the rehearsal techniques used by Peter Brook with those developed by Brecht, Stanislavski and Grotowski. He assesses Brook's debt to these practitioners. Rather than concentrate on any one process, in the way Selbourne does, Mitter shifts from one context to another in order to study how Brook's work is shaped and informed by these earlier directors. His sources include the writings of Brook, Stanislavski, Brecht and Grotowski as well as interviews with Brook and actors.

What is interesting about Mitter's work is that he very explicitly attempts to develop a method of writing about rehearsal that is somewhere between what he describes as "exercises abstracted from the reality of rehearsal"¹ and rehearsal logs which "tend to be far too embroiled in the day-to-day details of workshop to give a sufficiently substantial account of the principles and aspirations that underlie the work they discuss" (Mitter, 1992:2). He recognises the need to ground general reflections on rehearsal in some sort of actual context as well as avoiding a casebook approach that, while accurate and detailed, is not necessarily making any theoretical advance. A problem with Mitter's work is that he compares Brook's work with, for instance, Stanislavski's practices without necessarily understanding each director within a socio-cultural and historical setting. As Tiffany Stern writes, "Nowhere is the tendency to conflate modern and past theatrical practice more marked than in the field of rehearsal" (Stern, 2000:2).

To sum up, as I have detailed above, there are a number of written accounts of directors' work in rehearsal. These come in the form of interviews, directors' own documented reflections, the casebooks of writers such as Selbourne and Hiley, Mitter's compare and contrast approach focusing on Brook and some earlier twentieth-century

¹ He cites Viola Spolin's *Improvisation for the Theatre* (1983).

directors. By comparison, Susan Letzler Cole's book *Directors in Rehearsal: a Hidden World* (1992) is a notable departure from these other writings. She not only concentrates on analysing rehearsal processes in and of themselves, rather than using them solely to further understand performance choices, but her research is based on having documented hours and hours of professional work. This is a significant shift away from Mitter's gathering of second hand sources. As Cole argues, "the only way to study professional rehearsals is to observe them" (Cole, 1992:3).

Cole manages the difficult task of collapsing hundreds of hours of rehearsal documentation into approachable yet detailed chapters. The book is divided into ten chapters – one per production – and, as the title of the book indicates, Cole focuses on the working practices of directors. For each case study, she describes single moments from one rehearsal session as anchor points while she draws on other sessions from the same process¹ in order to tease out themes. For instance, in relation to Elinor Renfield's direction of *The Cherry Orchard*, Cole writes:

A touching rehearsal of a tiny dialogue between Anya and Dunyasha in act one illustrates the difficulty and delicacy of ensemble work in a Chekhovian scene of conversational bypass. (*ibid*, 1992:28)

Like Selbourne and Hiley, Cole carefully takes the reader through some of the minutiae of rehearsal practice, a tiny direction, an actor's glance, and in a self-reflexive turn, Cole is careful to point out how her accounts interrelate with each rehearsal process as a whole:

The work of rehearsal work – what, in fact, often makes actors irritable and frustrated – is the forced enactment of the flow and the stoppages that are inherent in all creative activity. My own analysis of rehearsal temporary "stops" a process whose stoppages can only be understood as part of a continuum. (Cole, 1992:9)

¹ From the same case study.

Cole's second book, *Playwrights in Rehearsal: The Seduction of Company* (2001), follows a similar structure to her earlier work. However, instead of examining the director, she focuses on another central figure in theatre rehearsal – the playwright. Investigating and documenting rehearsals that were attended, and in some cases directed, by eight American playwrights, Cole poses the question: “Are the presence and the absence of the playwright, at different points in rehearsal, equally empowering for the company?” (Cole, 2001: xiii)

It is possible to build on Cole's work ¹ in the following ways:

1. Cole, in limiting each production to only one chapter, perhaps inadequately reflects the sort of time practitioners spent on rehearsals. A six week process cannot be sufficiently discussed or analysed in twenty pages. This is linked to the fact that Cole did not attend every rehearsal session, but rather dipped in and out of the processes. A more sustained research approach, one that involves a lengthier time spent with practitioners, might produce an account that more effectively deals with the “flow” and “stoppages”.
2. Cole, by focusing on the directors' and playwrights' practices, often neglects the actors as passive agents in the rehearsal process. This limited attention towards the actors is perhaps due to directors' propensity for talking throughout the rehearsal process. Therefore, directors can be seen to be ‘doing’ more in rehearsal. Describing the movement of actors is a difficult task, and, in Cole's accounts, the performers are sometimes represented as

¹ Playwrights in Rehearsal: The Seduction of Company (2001)

merely existing to fulfil the director's vision. This is invariably associated with the implicit theoretical framework Cole adopts, where the actor is the subject of the director's gaze¹.

3. Cole is doubtful about the extent to which her work is actively theorised. In the introduction to her earlier book, she begins to explore the various metaphors used by practitioners to refer to directing. Directors are described as:

Father-figure, mother, ideal parent, teacher, ghost, invisible presence, third eye, voyeur, ego or superego, leader of an expedition to another world, autocratic ship captain, puppet-master, sculptor/visual artist, midwife, lover, marriage partner, literary critic, trainer for athletic team, trustee of democratic spirit, psychoanalyst, listener, surrogate-audience, author, harrower/gardener, beholder, ironic recuperator of the maternal gaze. (Cole, 1992: 5)

Cole decides that "the maternal gaze" comes closest to the being the most overarching trope (*ibid*: 4). She continues by saying she will not use "the gaze" as an organising principle, explaining that:

While this [decision] may result in some lack of theoretical rigor, it may at the same time protect against some of the dangers of theoretical rigor. (*ibid*: 4)

Cole may not wish to explicitly base her rehearsal observations on a Lacanian framework, however she does do so implicitly, not just by drawing directly on Lacanian analysis (*ibid*:62) but also by comparing rehearsal work with psychoanalytic theory in general. (*ibid*: 32)

Richard Trousdell, in a review of Cole's book, argues that she draws heavily on Lacan and he summarises her work as follows:

¹ This is what I tried to avoid doing in my thesis. Although my research focuses on directors' practices, it would be impossible to offer a comprehensive study if I did not mention actors' work in, as far as is possible, equal measure.

How directors see, how their seeing affects what they see, and how being seen seeing influences the work of theatre are the core objects of this study. (Trousdel, 1993:62)

The problem with avoiding “theoretical rigor”, as Cole puts it, is that there is no obligation on the writer to identify and, perhaps more importantly, question the chosen research methodology. This becomes problematic when the writer mistakenly assumes that a lack of explicit theory will somehow produce a more neutral, less obstructed account.

In Cole’s 2001 book, *Playwrights in Rehearsal: The Seduction of Company*, there is even less self-reflection. All research at least implicitly adopts a methodological approach, and one of the tasks an academic must undertake is to examine their approach. This is highlighted by recently deceased¹ Greek director, Lefteris Voyiatzis, one of the contemporary pioneers of the Modern Greek theatrical scene:

I prefer rehearsal to the actual performance itself; all this process of discovery. You are interested in seeing where you are, what you do, what the others do; to acquire this pleasure, which is a mystery, since anybody can sense that, even those without talent. What does this pleasure mean though? That we can do whatever we want? Definitely not, we cannot do what we want – and it is then we are genuinely free. Otherwise we are simply unaccountable [to anything].²

All these accounts of practitioners’ practices and rehearsal work provide numerous methodological insights. Practitioners reflecting on their own work may offer

¹ 8th May 2013.

² Μου αρέσουν περισσότερο οι πρόβες από την παράσταση. Όλη αυτή η διαδικασία της ανακάλυψης. Σε ενδιαφέρει να δεις πού βρίσκεσαι, τι κάνεις, τι κάνουν οι άλλοι. Να αποκτήσεις αυτή την ευχαρίστηση που είναι μια πολύ μυστήρια έννοια, εφόσον μπορεί να τη νιώθουν και οι ατάλαντοι. Τι σημαίνει, όμως, ευχαρίστηση; Το ότι μπορούμε να κάνουμε ό,τι θέλουμε; Όμως όχι, δεν μπορούμε να κάνουμε ό,τι θέλουμε - και τότε ακριβώς είμαστε πραγματικά ελεύθεροι. Αλλιώς, είμαστε ασύδοτοι.
<http://www.lifo.gr/mag/features/3126>.

glimpses into working processes, but this does not necessarily enable them to outline the common sense dimensions of rehearsal.

One of my tasks is to adapt all these rehearsal accounts for school theatre rehearsals. It is necessary, therefore, for my agenda to be clear, the main objective being to discern what this research offers and what its limitations might be. Overall, the issue is one of reflection; researchers must be willing to identify and question their methodological approaches.

My intention is that this agenda will contribute to the Greek Theatre in School society by helping other teachers and theatre practitioners – dramatologists, drama teachers - to give them a basic model or framework for directing TiS, which they can then build on, adapt and modify to suit their own particular working contexts. In turn I hope this study will help teachers/theatre practitioners and facilitators involved with school theatre to create their own framework. It is generally accepted that there is a variety of approaches to directing, each generated by a unique human being in a particular theatrical and social context. To paraphrase Wolcott's¹ thoughts on ethnography and the ethnographer: it is probably correct to say that there are as many versions of the work characterising each major category as there are researchers working in it. "*We are all self-styled researchers*. Individual differences we bring to our work only exacerbate the infinite variation that different problems and settings present." (Wolcott, 1992: 38-9, his emphasis)

¹ Wolcott, H. F. (1992) Posturing in Qualitative Inquiry. In LeCompte, M. D., Millroy, W. L. and J. P. Preissle (eds.) *The handbook of qualitative research in education*, San Diego: Academic Press, pp. 3-52

I would say that all the T/Ds who are involved with school theatre productions are self-styled directors based on their cumulative experience of putting on performances. Cole states that “talent, experience, intuition and hard work” (Cole, 2004:3) are the essential qualities for someone to become a successful teacher/director.

This is why I chose critical ethnography as the research framework for my project, for it has enabled me to investigate the research questions through field observation. Ethnography offers ways of capturing and reflecting on the ordinary details of everyday life as well as the broader socio-cultural dimensions. Reading Michael Jackson’s introduction to *Things as They Are* (1996), in which he outlines some guidelines for a phenomenological anthropology, marked an important point in my research. Jackson reassures researchers that “telling a story” is enough and that lived human experience is both pedestrian and magical. This aligns with Mitchels (1984) who says that the case that is to be investigated should be a ‘telling’ case with which the researcher will make apparent all the elements inside and outside of the rehearsal room.

Inside elements of rehearsal are all the micro-practices that go on day-by-day: the building of the characters, the directing styles, the laughter, the noise, the sweating. Outside elements of rehearsal are all the external events or incidents that had an impact on the rehearsal process. For example, the social and political disturbances in Greece, together with immigration issues, raised interesting questions and discussions amongst the participants which consequently created a new perspective through which to approach the play and the characters.

This section maps out a preliminary division and categorisation of the rehearsal work itself how, expressly, the practitioners began to approach their practice and,

importantly, what they understood that practice to be. In many ways, Chapter Two lays out what Phillip Zarrilli might refer to as the 'literal arenas'¹ of rehearsal work.

All the aforementioned accounts of practitioners' practices and rehearsal work provide numerous methodological insights. Practitioners reflecting on their own work may offer glimpses into working processes, but this does not necessarily enable them to outline the more common sense dimensions of rehearsal. Rehearsal observers need to be clear about their agendas to glean information into performance choices; to study a high-profile director's work and, importantly, they need to question what this research offers and what its limitations might be. Overall, the issue is one of reflexivity: researchers must be willing to identify and interrogate their methodological approaches.

The power the director has in deciding how labour and time will be used (the institution within which the theatre event is generated notwithstanding) and the rehearsal strategies he/she employs reflect the centralising of functions and the rise of the director to becoming the 'dominant creative force in today's theatre' (Bradby.1988:1).

Ultimately in examining how the four T/Ds worked with the mounting of school theatre performance I would like to explore what constitutes a classroom teacher as director and an ensemble – students of the school - in action and if and how these practices and knowledge they bring in the rehearsal rooms can inform a model of approaching theatre school performances. Is this a genuinely alternative way of working or does it simply reflect what Benedetti defines as the process of being an 'effective

¹ In his ethnography of Kalaripayattu practices in Southern India, Zarrilli suggests that the martial art might be considered as a 'complex nexus of four interactive areas': the literal arenas, the social arena, the arenas of cultural production, and the arena of experience and self-formation (1998: 9). In this way, 'literal arenas' refers to the very immediate practices themselves and where/how they are located in place/time.

director' ? In constructing an analysis of T/Ds' working methodology the central question of this thesis is to attempt to determine how the S/As operated as an ensemble under T/Ds' direction; that is, to place classroom teachers' practice as directors between, on the one hand, the majoritarian school theatre practice of state schools in Greece and on the other, studying the rehearsal processes in a broader context of the society and the impact on the T/Ds' directing methods.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1.Introduction

In this chapter I describe the methodology¹ of my research taking into account the relevant ethics by presenting the selection and justification for the research methods – an ethnographic perspective – used to investigate my research questions. I use the term “method(s)” to refer broadly to different *research designs* such as ethnography, action research and *methods of data collection* such as interviews, observation and questionnaires. Methodology, then, is discussing and making decisions about both.

I conducted my research with an empirically-based approach. As has been mentioned in the literature Review (Chapter 2), there is an absence of empirical social research on school theatre rehearsal and on its related institutional settings. I would like to think that the empirical focus of my study is unusual not only for studies of school theatre but for the ethnography regarding school settings, as I intend to set about further developing a critical framework within which to study familiar educational settings such as school music rehearsals, nativity plays or even a departure from school theatre such as theatre within the community.

McAuley, (1995) regards empirical research as a powerful tool in order to understand how “rehearsal is a vital generative force of theatre” (1995:3-4). Empirical research, which in Greek means the experience you get from real life, was the starting point for conducting my research as I wanted to experience every stage of producing a school performance.

¹ Ethics clearance was secured by the Ethical Committee of Roehampton University and the Pedagogical Institute of Greece.

I first illustrate the main epistemological characteristics of this perspective and then discuss: (1) the methods of data collection, (2) the issue of research quality and (3) the framework used for analysing the data.

3.2. A Situated Ethnographic Perspective as a Research Method

As Agar (1999) explains, the selection of a research method is the procedure of relating research questions to data which can answer these questions. The research method which seems to ‘fit’ my research questions and the problematic¹ where these questions emerged (see Introduction) is an ethnographic one which, in general terms, involves participating in people’s everyday lives for a period of time by observing, listening and talking to them (Hammersley and Atkison 1995, Pigiaki 1988, Brewer 2000, Pole and Morrison 2003, Heath and Street 2008). The goal of this participation is the construction of a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973: 3-30); a description free from pre-supposition about “what’s going on in a specific situation”, enriched with the participants’ point of view about how they act in their context. However, the ethnographic method is contextualised in different ways from discipline to discipline and from researcher to researcher. Therefore, the discussion about ethnography generally (e.g. Creswell 1988) seems to be fuzzy because ethnography is:

- Contextualized within broader and different epistemological frames e.g. Critical Ethnography (Thomas 1993, Quantz 1992), Microanalysis of Interaction (Erickson 1992), and educational ethnography² (Popkewitz & Wehlage, 1977).

¹The term problematic (coined to by Althusser 1971) refers to the process of asking, searching, collecting data, acting within specific theoretical and methodological frames which make this process meaningful and coherent.

²Analysed further in this section.

- Used for the purposes of different fields, e.g. sociology (Grant and Fine 1992, Smith 2005), education (Shulman 1997, Freebody 2003), anthropology (Fetterman 1998).
- Considered in the methodological discussion as related to or synonymous with terms such as “qualitative research, case study research, field research, or anthropological research” (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993: 2).

Therefore, the conceptualisation of ethnography seems to be an important issue for developing a methodological reflexivity (Maunter and Doucet 2003) or a methodological awareness (Seale 2002); in other words, methodology not seen as an “object” but as an epistemological construction aligned with specific theoretical positions and research questions. But is ethnography an appropriate methodology for an educational setting?

3.3. Educational ethnography or ethnography situated in a school setting.

As stated above, ethnography is a methodological approach that describes, analyses, and helps one understand a particular culture (Popkewitz, 1981). Centred in the qualitative research tradition, ethnography allows the researcher to investigate contextual questions beyond the reach of methodological approaches in which particular variables are isolated. As noted by Willis (1997):

Quantitative studies often consider only the most easily observed and empirically verifiable characteristics of the environment. Qualitative studies usually attempt more fully to consider both observed characteristics and specific qualities perceived as personal forms of meaning. (p.2)

Willis suggested that the quantitative tradition, in attempting to obtain verifiable data which can then be quantitatively tabulated, often misses the more interpretive aspects of a social setting, such as the overall environment of a given school. A qualitative approach may thus provide a complementary study, since it incorporates a view of social interaction as it occurs within its natural setting.

Ethnography is useful for looking into questions about educational and classroom practice (Popkewitz & Wehlage, 1977). This research approach has long been used by anthropologists and sociologists to help to understand schooling, since its focus is on the natural flow of events (Tabachnick, 1981). A variety of data collection techniques such as observations, interviews, material analysis and, occasionally, surveys are used. The purpose of data collection in school ethnography is to identify and understand patterns of conduct that guide participants' day-to-day practice, as well as to explore the institutional structures that shape that practice. Popkewitz & Tabachnick (1981) have provided an excellent source on the process of school ethnography.

Educational ethnography has evolved from sociology, psychology and anthropology, and may be defined as single or multi-setting case studies developed with a specific process in mind. Spindler (1982) described its ethnographic intent:

Ethnography of schooling refers to educational and enculturative processes that are related to schools and intentional schooling, though the concept leaves room for studies of playgrounds, play groups, peer groups, patterns of violence in schools and other aspects of school-related life. Native views of reality held by participants make ideas, behaviour and communication sensible to oneself and to others. Therefore a major part of the ethnographic task is to understand what socio-cultural knowledge participants bring to and generate in the social setting being studied. (p.2-7)

Spindler's text (1982) provides a collection of insights into the methodology of ethnography.

A study of student music teachers (Krueger, 1985) provides an example of ethnography in Music education. The modification and maintenance of newly-qualified music teachers' actions, beliefs, and perspectives were examined during the process of student teaching. The inquiry explored the effects of expectations, pressures, implicit institutional assumptions and school rules upon student teachers' actions and perceptions. Ethnographic data collected included observational records, tape recording, document analysis of materials given to the subjects, formal and informal interviews with participants and personal diaries written by the subjects. Findings revealed that student teachers' perspectives were highly influenced through the co-operation between teacher practices and institutional traditions, structural organisation and constraints within the school setting. Students and teachers demonstrated a tendency to perceive existing classroom situations and pedagogy as given and unalterable. As their experience increased, however, it could be seen that these perceptions were modified; student and teachers were easily influenced by colleagues to bring about change so that, as a result of their *actual* experience, they changed their minds and saw the previously immutable issues as alterable.

Other innovative ethnographic studies have also begun to appear in Music education (L'Roy, 1983; Shehan, 1986). In a study of the musical experiences of elementary school children, Zimmerman (1982) concluded that ethnography is a valuable method for inquiry into Music education classrooms since it allows for the discovery of unanticipated questions and the observation of a wide variety of events.

An ethnographic methodology has particular advantages in understanding the work of teachers and students (Patti J. Krueger, in Binnema's thesis. 1996:53):

- (1) It permits closeness to the people, events and natural practice within the context being studied. The researcher has access not only to what people report about their beliefs, but also to how these beliefs actually guide their work.
- (2) It allows the researcher to give attention to unanticipated, unintended and immeasurable consequences of social action; it also enables inquiry into why events seem to happen in a particular manner.
- (3) Study of naturally occurring situations enables the researcher to consider different types of motivation for actions brought to bear on a situation. One type of motivation might be the *purposes* individuals bring to a situation, another might be the *needs* produced by the situation itself, and yet another might be *pressures* originating from the ideology and the economic structure of the society outside of the school. Ethnography also allows one to consider the dialectical nature of all of these causes.

3.4. Ethnographic Orientations

In this section I concentrate on what is involved in studying and writing about the minutiae of rehearsal work. Selbourne, Hiley, Sher and Cole all provided detailed descriptions of rehearsal activity. The challenge however is to develop a methodological framework within which to organise and understand such work. I was for a time interested in whether a more qualitative approach to verbal exchanges in rehearsal might yield a productive analysis. I therefore turned to sociolinguistics, conversation analysis and specifically the paradigm of ‘codeswitching’ as a possible means to understand some of the detail of rehearsal interaction. Below I briefly sketch out the beginnings of a codeswitching analysis, the impasses I encountered and my subsequent reorientation

toward methodological frameworks which were able to account for a broader range of rehearsal activity.

Codeswitching refers to “the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode” (Heller, 1988:1) and I wondered whether this practice might relate to the way in which practitioners in rehearsal switched between operating within a frame of reality and one of fiction. Whereas ethnographic linguists might study bilingual and multilingual communities, I wanted to use codeswitching to explain how practitioners slipped so easily from being ‘inside’ the rehearsing of a scene (literally delivering the lines of a playscript), and being ‘outside’ it (analysing the scene and commenting on the fiction). In making my investigations, I remembered a student who, whilst she was rehearsing, said “I’m really going to cry”¹. She just had finished her lines, truly inhabiting her character and yet in the same breath she was commenting on her character’s lines from a perspective that was ‘outside’ the character she was portraying.

Initially, codeswitching was appealing as it provided a wealth of terminology that could be related to small details of rehearsal interaction. As a researcher eager to qualify and frame what had been an intense period of fieldwork, the socio-linguistic approach with its categories, terms and careful analysis provided great initial encouragement. However, I quickly encountered three major obstacles. Firstly, codeswitching operated as a binary where people switch between two distinct ‘languages’ and it therefore cannot necessarily account for more fluid relationships. In rehearsal, participants often seemed to inhabit in-between states – being in-between character and actor and fiction and reality, for example T/Ds would act as teachers, as directors, as friends and as set designers (some of their roles, which will be examined

¹ Student from rehearsal March 2010.

thoroughly in Chapter 5). Bringing a codeswitching approach to such multi-layered interactions would reduce any dialogue to a form of ping pong from one ‘language’ to another. Secondly, I reified ‘code’ or frames’ without explicating exactly what participants understood as fiction or reality; that is, these definitions were unproblematically imposed by me, the researcher, rather than defined by the participants’ own categorisation of what they understood themselves to be doing. Thirdly, by concentrating on verbal communication, the linguistic paradigm of codeswitching clearly ignored the physicality of fieldwork: the importance of bodies in places and of those exchanges unaccounted for by taxonomy of categories. Lastly, codeswitching as a theory presupposes hierarchical relationships between researcher and participants. I did not want to sit above the activity I was investigating but rather study the processes.

3.4.1. Framework of Research

The above detour through an area of socio-linguistics led me into critical ethnography. Critical ethnography—an inherently interdisciplinary area—informs the overall shape of my work, with dimensions of sociology, historiography, discourse analysis, phenomenology and hermeneutics creating a dynamic theoretical weave. Critical ethnography came to deeply inform my research approach. I proposed that in order to make sense of the weeks and weeks of rehearsal work, I needed theoretical frameworks dealing with micropractices in their lived immediacy, ways to understand macro socio—cultural, historical and institutional contexts, and lastly, theories of embodiment.

As a means to describe the rehearsal work, I use frameworks of performance analysis—in particular, McAuley's writings (1999)—in order to approach how practitioners used the rehearsal space, how they moved and spoke in that space, and

how certain design elements were developed (costume, set and props). I build on this framework by not only taking into account one set of interpretations ('the practitioners are semioticians constructing signs for an audience') but also by investigating how practitioners understood their own practices. Here is where discourse analysis is productive.

Writing about ethnographic methodology, Okely reminds us of its capacity for 'graphic scrutiny' (1996:17) and Geertz suggests that it is 'microscopic' (1973:21). Geertz borrows Gilbert Ryle's notion to describe ethnography as "an elaborate venture in thick description" (1973:6) which, for Geertz, involves 'sorting out the structures of signification in any cultural setting'. He argues:

What the ethnographer is in fact faced with is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and to which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render. (*ibid*:10)

For Geertz, the use of codeswitching to understand detailed verbal exchanges would almost certainly have led to an impoverishment of the data - in this case, the rehearsal processes - resulting in a 'thin' description. Rather than leaping to conclusions about what social activity 'means', Geertz advocates the importance of interpreting participants' own cultural interpretations of rehearsals. In this thesis I will draw heavily on Geertz to describe the rehearsal work; I will also use frameworks of performance analysis from the professional field since, as stated previously, there are no written accounts which investigate educational theatre and, finally, McAuley's writings (1999) will inform my approach to how participants use the rehearsal space, how they moved and spoke in the space, and how certain design elements are developed (costume, set and props). I build on this framework by not only taking into account one set of interpretations but also investigating how participants understood their own practices. Here is where the discourse analysis is productive.

Foucault's concept of discourse has been taken up by ethnographers, and is similarly deployed in this thesis to understand some of the week-to-week interactions and practices of the practitioners. 'Discourse', both in Foucault's mind and in the way I use it in this thesis, refers to the connection between the regulation of bodies, the production of knowledge and the construction of subjectivities (Foucault 1977). Born (1995) describes the ethnographic material in her book about the Parisian music institute, IRCAM, as a study of Foucauldian micro-practices in their "empirical immediacy"¹ Abu-Lughod and Lutz, in their anthology *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (1990), argue that the most productive analytical approach is to study discourses on emotion within diverse ethnographic contexts. For these theorists, Foucault is central to their careful study of the minutiae of cultural participants' ways of living. Phillip Zarrilli (1995) draws on Foucault's analytic "technologies of the self" in order to reflect on the discourses that circulate in actor training and the implicit theories of self that inform this practice. Jackson invokes this same analytic "to focus on culturally conditioned modes of consciousness and body use" (1989: 120).

Similarly, this thesis studies the discourses surrounding school theatre rehearsals: *directing* - with the school teacher as the theatre director; *acting* - where the students were tasked with embodying a role fully; and *producing* - the inclusiveness of the rehearsals spaces; the race against time², both for students who had to do their theatre work alongside the demands of the school's curriculum and for teachers who had to explore the playtext and construct a performance in addition to preparing and undertaking their daily duties. Further to this, I investigate some of the ways in which the participants' 'selves' are formed and recreated through such discourses. From my

¹ Crary supports the idea that what the observer sees is a "field organised around exchange and flux" (1990:62) Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. London: MIT P, 1990.

² Time was an issue which will be discussed thoroughly in the following chapters.

thorough investigations into this subject matter, I could not find any prior research material concerning educational theatre, something which leads me to believe this study may be unique.

Following phenomenological anthropology, this thesis builds on both a Foucauldian analysis and Geertzian concern with signs demonstrating that the discourses circulating in rehearsal were not abstracted from experience. Jackson writes, “I do not want to risk dissolving the lived experience of the subject into the anonymous field of discourse” (1989:1), arguing that the ways people talk, think and move are intimately related to how they really feel. When a student/actor clutches her heart and explains she’s been ‘exposed’ during the rehearsal, this is not an abstract trope or merely a part of discourse of self, but is a lived metaphor: the student/actor really experiences the sensation that the outer layers of her chest have been peeled back to reveal an inner core. Rather than metaphors “expressing a concept in terms of a bodily image, they disclose an integral connection of the psychic and the physical” (Jackson 1989:120).

One of the aims of my research is to understand how the micro-practices of rehearsal and the discourses within which they are framed are also rooted in a phenomenological reality. However, these week-to-week discourses were also intimately connected to larger socio-cultural, institutional-societal contexts. The practitioners brought with them their previous experiences, and the schools themselves had their own histories and positioning within the social context. Following Foucault, these micro-practices were micro-political, for it was through ‘small’ moments that the political was revealed (Born 1995: 25). In the following section it will be shown how these two case studies enable the researcher – and the research itself- “to get from a collection of ethnographic miniatures ... to wall sized culturescapes” (Geertz 1973:21).

3.5. Contextualisation of my research

My contextualisation of the ethnographic method was based on two interrelated epistemological principles:

3.5.1. First Epistemological Principle

The first is the view of ethnography as both a perspective and a text. Specifically my ethnographic method is an anthropological one, focusing on the description both of micro- and macro-contexts. After exploring their chosen field of discovery, anthropologists write an ethnographic account where they describe the cultural patterns and behaviour they found in the field. My ethnographic approach is a means of exploring issues '*in situ*' (Wolcott 1990)¹, that is to say, the moment of genesis for theatre-making in schools: the rehearsal process where the classroom teacher becomes the director and the students are the actors.

However, the above contextualisation of ethnography is enhanced by written representations of what "happened in the field" (Duranti, 1997, Van Maanen 1988). These representations are not neutral but epistemologically-laden reconstructions through different means such as field notes (Emesron et al. 1995), transcriptions based on audio or video recording (Green et al. 1997) and rhetoric practices, that is, what was said in the field specifically during 'unofficial' observation times. In this way, the author has the ability to represent and construct his/her object at the textual level since written ethnography "has a degree of independence...from the fieldwork on which it is

¹ The Chicago School of Sociology (known also as the 'sociology of the street' see Burgess 1982 and Kurtz 1984 for a general discussion), was the first that used ethnography for on-site issues and specifically examined how social life was organised in urban settings in order to understand the deep social problems which emerged in them.

based” (Van Maanen, 1988:4). This enhancement (ethnography as a perspective which cannot be distinguished from the written ethnographic text) has created a “crisis of representation [which] arises from uncertainty about adequate means of describing social reality” (Marcus and Fischer, 1986:8). Specifically, some researchers (for example, Marcus and Cushman 1982) have argued that since it is impossible to describe what happened in the field independently of its textual representation, the modernist myth, whereby scientific knowledge represents reality isolated from rhetoric or narrative devices, should be disputed.

With my ethnographic account, I hoped not just to overcome this “crisis of representation” but to present and justify my epistemological positions whilst minimizing the gap between “what happened” and “what happened from the researcher’s perspective” i.e. writing a polyphonic and dialogical ethnographic representation (Tedlock 1983, Chouliaraki 1994, de Laine 2000). Specifically, I tried to avoid the realist representational conventions (see details Van Maanen 1988) which, at the epistemological level, signal an *a priori* reality and, at the textual level, signal the researcher’s possibility (or power) to control the process of representation from their point of view.

Ethnography is considered to be “enmeshed in writing” and is “minimally a translation of experience into textual form” (Clifford, 1988:25). This textualisation has been seen as the “process through which unwritten behaviour, speech, beliefs, oral tradition and ritual become a potential meaningful ensemble” (*ibid*: 38). The textualisation of ethnographic observation has, however, been called into question by James Clifford, among others, over claims that the documenter/researcher should appear as:

The purveyor of truth in the text: the experiential “I was there” of the ethnographer as insider and participant ... [which serves as a] unifying source of [textual] authority. (1985:35).

Paul Rabinow has commented that once this ‘unique authority’ has been established, the writer often “disappears from the text” thereby establishing the anthropologist’s hidden “scientific authority” (in Clifford 1986:244). Judith Okely has argued that a way to disrupt this monograph is for the reflexive “I of the ethnographer” to subvert the idea of the observer as “impersonal machine”. This “autobiographical insertion” is conceived as being different from the “stamp of the author’s authority”: not simply “I was there, but the self and cultural category whom the others confronted, received and confided in” (Okely & Calloway, 1992: 24). The implication for the rehearsal analyst is to attempt to record in the text how others related to the self in the field. This experiential ‘I was there’ authority of the ethnographer is identified by Clifford as one of “four modes of [textual] authority – experiential, interpretive, dialogical and polyphonic” (Clifford, 1988:53).

There is another mode resulting from conducting the research in the theatrical field. If, for example, the observer/documenter/researcher positions him/herself - and is positioned by his/her subjects - into playing various roles in the field, the writing up of the ethnographic text and the creation of the rehearsal story becomes a “theatrical act” in itself (in Melzer 1991:266). All these modes of authority are in Clifford’s words, “available to the writer”, though “none are pure or absolute” but offer various approaches that one needs to be aware of, as they often converge in the same text. (*ibid*: 54). Clifford’s main concern with purely interpretive writing is that it excludes potential dialogue between the Self and Other which offers another way to break up the otherwise monologist text. Additionally, while the mutual encounter between Self and Other in the field always has a ‘polyphonic’ or multi-vocal quality, this quality risks being consumed

or lost in the proscribed text which is constructed by the Self alone. There is an ever-present danger of Others' voices not being able to "penetrate the discursive speech of the ethnographer" (Okely & Calloway, 1992:121).

Postmodern ethnography dreams of a polyphonic text, a "utopia of plural authorship" (Clifford, 1986:51) where informants speak with equal authority as the analyst and where the readers are freer to make up their own minds. Clifford, however, regards this form of authority as remaining "utopian" because such a text, which would in effect be a collection of lengthy quotes, would still require an editor. The reality is that in dialogic and polyphonic texts quotations will still always be "staged by the quoter" (1988, 50-51). According to Clifford "writing a culture" is therefore not an "empirical entity but an analytical implication" (Okely & Calloway, 1992:122). Following this view, I recognise that however well I try to write a polyphonic representation of the four teachers'/directors' processes, my representations will always be bound by my own process of writing. However, in McAuley's words, it is "still my analytical enterprise and I am inserting the [students]/actors' and [teachers]/directors' stories into another larger narrative" (1988:82).

Current ethnographic practice asks that the authorial authority "work through the specificity of self in order to contextualise and transcend it" (Hastrup in Okely & Calloway, 1992: 2). If, for practitioner Peter Brook, this is a matter of showing there is "nothing up the sleeves", for the theatre ethnographer it is more a case of emptying one's sleeves and disclosing one's prejudices in both the observational and writing-up phases (Brook, 1968:109). In another practitioner's words, those of Jonathon Miller, "it is better to be conscious of your preconceptions rather than simply being a victim of them" (in Melzer, 1991:263). In my thesis, however, I am trying to follow a modified approach to my ethnographic text by reconstructing and representing aspects of reality

from “a real-ist¹ point of view” (Silverman and Todore, 1980:115), where my dominant voice is “interrupted” in the following three ways:

1. Using “personal” stylistic features such as those suggested by Davis (1984), e.g. “Prefer the active to the passive voice. Try to begin rather few of them [sentences] with “The”, “It is”, “There is””(p.315) (see also Pole and Morrison 2003)
2. Making the presuppositions of my interpretations explicit, thereby signalling how these interpretations are constructed at the epistemological level.
3. Trying to articulate analytical issues as much as possible from the participants’ viewpoint of their own actions and practices rather than reconstructing these using only my own theoretical and analytical views.

3.5.2. Second Epistemological Principle

The second epistemological principle of the contextualisation of my ethnographic approach, and which is closely related to the written representation discussed above, was the transcendence of the dualism most frequently presented in ethnographies, “emic” versus “etic” or the “insider’s” perspective vs. the “outsider’s” explanatory perspective². I will discuss my own “insider-ness” and “outsider-ness” in more detail towards the end of this thesis and add a very crucial variable: the translation work that has been necessary for the collected data and used elsewhere in this thesis,

¹ An artist or writer who seeks to represent the familiar or typical in real life rather than an idealised, formalized, or romantic interpretation

² The distinction between emic and etic points of view has been based on Pike’s distinction between phonetic and phonemic analysis, which, as Agar (1996) explains below, emphasises two different perspectives in phonological description:

“Phonetic represents the set of possible distinctions that might be used in the characterisation of human speech, while phonemic is the subject of those distinctions useful in describing the sound differences that are perceived as significant by speakers of a particular language” (Agar, 1996:238).

adding an extra dimension to the task. Translating the data was like seeing it through an additional lens, subjectivity into subjectivity: my first subjective view was on what I was transcribing from the Greek language and the second was the subjective lens of translation from my transcription into English ¹.

As Todorov (1988) and O'Reilly (2005) explain, a paradox or an oxymoron is presented in using the ethnographic method. On the one hand, ethnographers have to keep a distance from the insiders they seek to explore in order to observe and understand their perspective or 'logic'. On the other, they have to minimise this distance and become like the insiders they seek to understand. This paradox is associated with the epistemological debate in ethnographic studies which sets forth the importance of exploring and understanding phenomena only from the participants' perspective, that is, an "emic" point of view.

Although the above distinction – emic vs etic – may be useful to refer to different analytical *foci*, it seems, as Agar (1996) has argued, to be questionable in practice:

In many recent anthropological discussions, emic and etic are used to characterize a different distinction, roughly translated as the "insider's" versus the "outsider's" point of view. The problem here is that it is difficult to imagine any ethnographic statement that is not a blend of these. A statement would almost always contain some assumptions about perception or intent on the part of group members, but it would also be constructed by the ethnographer in terms of his own professional context and goals. The original sense of emic and etic captures this blending and calls our attention to it. (Agar, 1996:238-9).

Therefore, although participants' emic points of view are very important for understanding the context of social phenomena through descriptions that are meaningful and functionally significant to them, an imbedded emic approach (Pelto 1970) can enhance what was "found" in the field through etic views by providing a more holistic

¹ I will elaborate on the "dual" subjectivity in a later section of the thesis.

view of the explored social phenomena. Following the example of Agar and Pelto in my ethnographic approach, I tried not to limit my focus to teachers' and students' "emic" points of view and simply provide descriptions of these views in terms of what usually happens in 'conventional' ethnography. On the contrary, I tried to supplement my descriptions of these views with explanation and interpretation, both of which signal how these points are related to deeper macro-contextual social structures or "to wall sized culturescapes" (Geertz 1973:21). In other words, in my thesis "thick description" is not associated with a detailed account of how the teachers and pupils, through their complex practices, construct theatre in their 'local' context – rehearsal rooms, plays – but rather how and why the making of the school theatre is subject to different trans-contextual relations. That is, school theatre-making is constructed in local contexts through complex practices which on the one hand presuppose and follow the macro-context of the theatre-making (the official discourse of 'Theatre in Education' in Greece) yet, on the other hand, reframe this discourse through an adapted application of theatrical education.

3.6. The arrangement of my fieldwork

I used anthropological frameworks, in particular the term 'fieldwork', to describe the many hours and weeks I spent in the rehearsal rooms with the participants. According to Fetterman, fieldwork is considered the:

... most characteristic element of any ethnographic research design since the researcher works in natural context. In this way conditions of laboratory or controlled research are avoided since they are considered as alien to people's natural action. (Fetterman 1998: 8).

However, an important question emerges: is fieldwork as ethnography and fieldwork as case study the same? Some researchers (Merriam 1998, Stake 1998, Yin 2003) have considered case studies as a method 'distinct' from ethnography while other

researchers (Mitchell 1984, Wolcott 1997) have talked about the analytical breadth which distinguishes case studies from ethnographies. The latter point is explained by Mitchell thus:

Each case study is a description of a specific configuration of events in which some distinctive set of actors have been involved in some defined situation at some particular point of time. Ethnographic reportage tends to be general in form: the analyst makes statements about the overall pattern of behaviour or belief derived from extensive observation. (Mitchell, 1984: 237)

Le Compte and Preissle (1993), in their discussion on this issue, have argued that the distinction between ethnography and case studies is a misleading one. Ethnography concerns a simple case which can be either broad, for example a cultural context, or narrow, such as a group or a classroom, whereas, as Stake argues, “case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of object to be studied” (Stake 1998:86, see also Hammersley 1992:184), able to be classified in different ways at different levels. In terms of the disciplinary orientation of case studies in educational research, they can be (see Merriam 1998 and Yin 2003 for details): (1) ethnographic (sociocultural analysis and interpretation), (2) historical (analysis of sequences of events), (3) sociological (analysis of social variables and socialisation) and (4) psychological (analysis of human behaviour). In terms of intent, the same studies can be: (1) descriptive (detailed accounts of objects under study without theoretical inferences), (2) interpretative (rich and “thick descriptions” of objects under study illustrating complex issues or constructing theoretical points) and (3) evaluative (performancing complex causal links or evaluating educational issues which cannot be explored through quantitative methods).¹ In terms of association with researchers’ attempts to generalise, case studies can be divided into three different types: (1) the intrinsic case study: the exploration of one specific,

¹ See Merriam 1998 and Yin 2003 for details.

probably unique instance of an object, studied because it is interesting or important in its own right, (2) the instrumental case study: the exploration of a theoretical or a social issue for illustrative purposes or understanding and, finally, (3) collective case studies: the exploration of several instances of an object to be studied for the purposes of identifying common characteristics or patterns (Stake 1998:88-89). Of the case study types described immediately above, collective case studies are useful in providing empirical generalisations while instrumental case studies provide only theoretical inferences¹.

In relation to the above categories of case studies, in my thesis the term ‘two ethnographic case studies’ refers to:

1. My attempt to identify through collective case study, common characteristics or patterns concerning the teachers’ directing styles when they put on school theatre productions.
2. My use of an ethnographic orientation or approach as a means of collecting data (see also Wolcott 1997 and Taft 1999); my fieldwork in two rehearsal rooms in two different secondary schools where I explored how the teachers conducted theatre-making with their students as a mid-curricular activity².
3. The building of a holistic interpretative framework (interpretative case studies) for understanding this phenomenon.

However, an important question I needed to address while designing my fieldwork was how much time I had to spend in these two rehearsal rooms to assure the validity of my study. Although traditional ethnographers propose one year as the minimum time for fieldwork (Goffman 1989, Spindler and Spindler 1992, Wolcott 1997, Smart 2008), this is not a prescriptive requirement. Ethnographies of schooling could be

¹ For details see Hammersley (1992:86)

² Although the activity meets the three criteria which constitute an extra-curricular activity: (1) occurring together with others in your own age group, 2) having an adult leader, and 3) meeting at least once a week at a regular time. (*c.f.*, Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). (In Mahoney *et al.* 2002: 73) it is also supplemented with other criteria: a) the adult leader(s) is/are school teachers working with the children during the week b) they use the school facilities to hold their rehearsals and school equipment to support the practicalities. This is explained more fully on page 31.

restricted to some months of fieldwork since what is examined is not a broad context (i.e. a culture or society) but a narrow one (i.e. a school or a classroom) where activities and roles are to some degree predetermined. As Spindler and Spindler argue:

In contrast to the time required for a community study, if we had to state a desirable time for an adequate study of a single classroom, or even a significant segment of a single classroom, such as a reading group, we would say 3 months, with observation continuing for a significant portion of every school day. It would be better if this 3-month period was spread over an entire school year, because some things just do not happen during a 3-month period. (Spindler & Spindler 1992:65)

Thus fieldwork in an educational setting may be less than a year (see Fetterman 1998:9 for an example).

Jeffrey & Troman (2004) have proposed the following distinction of time modes in organising ethnographic studies in education:

1. A compressed time mode: this mode, involves a short period of intense ethnographic research in which researchers inhabit a research site almost permanently for anything from a few days to a month. (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004: 538)
2. A selective intermittent time mode: this mode is one where the length of time spent doing the research is longer, for example, from three months to two years, but with a very flexible approach to the frequency of site visits. The frequency depends on the researcher selecting particular *foci* as the research develops and selecting the relevant events. (*ibid*: 540)
3. A recurrent time mode: a recurrent research mode is one where temporal phases formalise the research methodology. These research projects may aim to gain a picture by sampling the same temporal phases, e.g. beginnings and ends of terms, school celebratory periods such as Christmas, examination

periods, and inspections. Alternatively, researchers sample on a regular, predetermined basis irrespective of specific events. (*ibid*: 542)

The time mode I followed is a selective intermittent one. Following the example of other researchers who selected specific periods of time for doing fieldwork in two rehearsals rooms (e.g. Chouliaraki 1994, Hyland 1998, Castanheira et al. 2000, Kell 2006), I chose to attend all of the rehearsal processes of theatre-making in each school. These lasted from December 2009 until the end of April 2010, a period which I knew would allow me to collect a certain amount of data leading up to, and terminating on, the day of the performance. I assumed that my data would be adequate in order to help me analyse my findings and would be manageable¹, since my research was strictly framed for the purposes of a research degree. While validating the selective intermittent time mode for the purposes of my study, I became cognisant of the fact that spending months or even years in an alternative environment would yield richer, more empirical data than sitting in on a rehearsal process in two secondary schools in Athens. However as will be seen in the next section, the observation period for each case study was necessarily finite but enabled the researcher to experience the creative environment in its entirety, from conception to completion. The conclusion to this thesis addresses some of these considerations, along with the issue of translating the interpretation².

¹The collection of a manageable amount of data is an important consideration for effectively completing research since researchers face the possibility of either becoming overwhelmed by a plethora of data or not being able to substantiate their findings should they have too little. See Wolcott (2002) for a discussion of issues which emerge in doing a doctorate in educational ethnography and LeCompte and Preissle (1993) for a discussion about how much data “should be collected” in ethnographies.

² Towards the end of the thesis I intend to analyse two factors: firstly I conducted the research in a familiar environment regarding both the location (home country) and the field (school); and secondly the translating of the interpreted and transcribed data is, in itself, an additional interpretation.

3.7. The selection of two ethnographic case studies.

When I decided to use an ethnographic approach as a research method and focus on specific ethnographic case studies, a crucial question in the selection process emerged. The selection of cases is an important consideration because the construction of sampling directs the research to specific analytical paths and vice versa (Honingman 1982, Peshkin 2001); for example, exploring the variable ‘social class’ implies the construction of a sampling of schools which *represent* these various social classes. Specifically, I had to deal with how many cases – rehearsals – I should select, and why, as well as *how* I was to select these cases. In response to the first of these questions, I decided to select two ‘collective’ (Stake 1998) rehearsal case studies for the following reasons:

I hoped comparing and contrasting the teacher/directors’ practices might be useful. For example: How might School A’s and School B’s T/Ds’ approaches relate? What role (if any) does ‘place’ play in the rehearsal process? School A is located in the South West of Athens and School B in the North East. These questions were foregrounded in the weeks leading to the School B documentation. However, just hours into the process, my recollection of School A’s rehearsals dimmed and the ‘compare and contrast’ questions lost some clarity. From the outset, School A became all-consuming, and it was not always possible to conceive of it merely as something with which to compare School B. Consequently, my entire experience seemed to move beyond a ‘compare and contrast’ framework.

Two rehearsal cases could enhance the investigative depth of my research questions and thus they could, through analytical induction, better reveal relationships

and complexities about questions which were previously unknown. As Mitchell explains:

What the anthropologist using a case study to support an argument does is to performance how the general principles deriving from the theoretical orientation manifest themselves in some given set of particular circumstances. A good case study, therefore, enables the analyst to establish theoretically valid connections between the events and phenomena which previously were ineluctable. From this point of view, the search for a 'typical' case for analytic exposition is likely to be less fruitful than the search for a 'telling' case in which the particular circumstances surrounding a case, serve to make previously obscure theoretical relationships suddenly apparent Case studies used in this way are clearly more than 'apt illustrations'. Instead, they are means whereby general theory may be developed. (Mitchell, 1984: 239).

In response to the second question – the process of selection – I based my decisions on principles which are used generally in qualitative research¹ (Denzin 1970, Honigmann 1982, Patton 1990, Agar 1996). Specifically, I used an emergent framework in the selection of cases. First, I conducted six pilot interviews (May – June 2009) with teachers about their intentions to put on school theatre plays during the coming school year (2009-2010). I also was interested in finding teachers who would do plays that would be rehearsed throughout the school year as I wanted to follow the whole process from the choice and discussions about the play until the day just before the performance. I wanted to conduct research where the participants would be involved in weeks and weeks of rehearsals, working towards an opening performance night.

Four of the teachers interviewed were primary school teachers and the other two were secondary: the four primary school teachers would only direct school plays for one of the National or Revolutionary Days, which I did not intend to be the main focus of my thesis, whereas the two secondary school teachers I interviewed at least *intended* to

¹ However, this does not imply that cases cannot be representative or non-comparable since different researchers (Patton 1990, LeCompte and Preissle 1993, Miles and Huberman 1994) have proposed different ways of grouping cases – through criteria such as site, time, people and the events. (Burgess 1982, Hammersley and Atkison 1995) – based on researchers' background knowledge or preliminary work.

direct plays for performance at the end of the next school year, although they would know for sure when they went back to school at the start of the next academic year in September. I therefore decided to treat the primary school observations as supplementary¹ to my research and the two secondary schools as sites for my main data collection. As I will demonstrate in the analytical chapters of my thesis, important data emerged during the preliminary visits to the secondary schools which helped me understand the process of ‘theatre-making’ in the rehearsal cases. The supplementary observations I made proved significant in understanding and explaining important aspects of my findings as I will show in subsequent chapters. The supplementary observations and their implications for my research will be mentioned whenever it is necessary to support the findings which emerged from the research.

As Mitchell (1984) explained, I have decided to focus on school theatre ‘telling cases’. Specifically I constructed a convenient sampling (see Patton 1990) by finding some teachers who were interested in participating in my research and then, depending on the specific criteria presented below, I selected the ‘rehearsal cases’. In order to quickly and easily construct a context of trustworthiness for the application of my research, I decided to approach only teachers who had been acquaintances of friends and fellow colleagues but who I did not know personally. These teachers needed to fulfil the following criteria:

1. They should have some prior experience in directing school theatre performances. Equally, they should be comfortable with my research question to study the teacher when s/he is directing school theatre plays. I chose teachers with previous experience because it is one thing to direct a performance and quite another thing to set a performance: directing includes

¹ I will explain later in this chapter the importance of conducting supplementary observations page 123.

the teaching process, as stated previously in the literature review, whereas setting involves the technical preparation of the performance

2. They should not have already decided what the school theatre play would be for the next academic year as I wanted to document the whole process.

After applying these criteria I chose the ethnographic case studies for my thesis:

this constituted a sampling with certain similar and other differential characteristics.

	First ethnographic case	Second ethnographic case
Teachers' pseudonyms	Sophia and Katerina	Petros and Maria
Gender	Females	Male and Female
Teachers' subject specialisms:	Ancient & Modern Greek Literature (Katerina) Physics (Sophia)	Economics (Petros) Ancient & Modern Greek Literature (Maria)
Years of teaching experience	Sophia 10, Katerina 12	Petros 12, Maria 28
Years of putting on school theatre performances	Katerina 10, Sophia's first attempt	Petros 8, Maria 20
School pseudonym	School A	School B
Social context	Province in South West Athens	Province in North East Athens

3.7.1. Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines set by Roehampton Ethics Board (2005) and the Greek Pedagogical Institute were taken into account in the selection of the visual images. Before we started discussion, S/As were given the right of non-participation in any

formal or informal discussion. I told them they could at any stage withdraw their agreement to participate in any informal discussion that would have been written down by the researcher. Assurances were given both to T/Ds and S/As that all data collected would remain confidential and be used strictly for the purposes of the research. According to Cohen *et al* (2000, p.61), "... the information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity". So, their names, the address and name of their schools, or personal details have been replaced by codes (Bell, 1999). Finally, raw and processed data will be stored and locked in my office in London for three years after the completion of the thesis.

The data collection period of the ethnographic case studies ran between December 2009 and the end of April 2010. Before the main data collection I had preliminary discussions with the teachers explaining to them what the research was about, what I was intending to do and the need to inform the students of the initiative before I met them. Afterwards, I had meetings with the headteachers of both schools to inform them of what I wanted to do and what my research was about. I reassured them that details of the schools, (names, location and anything that would indicate the identities of the participants¹ – animate and inanimate) would not be disclosed in any form (written or spoken). All participants had to sign consent forms and undertake to inform students' parents of my presence during rehearsals. Both teachers and headteachers would meet the parents only if deemed necessary and if there was a particular query or question from a parent they would let me know. I left parent consent forms with teachers to hand out to the students.

¹ As the S/As observed for this thesis are now over 18, and their photos are already in the public domain via a blog written during rehearsals, I too have chosen to include photos of the participants as I believe the reader needs to see the setting of the research and some of the process in pictures. Photos also strengthen the description and the impression of the moment and, for the reader, will serve to break up the written text.

3.8. The setting of the two rehearsal cases

Before describing the educational and social setting of the ethnographic rehearsal case studies, let me specify how I use the terms *settings* and *cases* and *rehearsal spaces* in this thesis. The first (*settings*) emphasises the characteristics of both:

1. *The locales* – background information about the classroom, the schools and the social context – where social phenomena occur.
2. *The participants* – background information about the teacher, the pupils, and the other staff of each school – who act in relation to the ‘theatre making’.

The second (*cases*) concerns how a theoretical ground – the ‘theatre making’ in a school setting – is organised within these locales and explored in the specific cases.

In the following chapters the term ‘*Fairytale*’ will refer to the first ethnographic rehearsal case – the process of theatre-making in School A – and the term ‘*Suitcase*’ will refer to the second rehearsal case – the process of theatre-making in School B.

The third (*rehearsal spaces*) concerns the rehearsals that took place in particular places and were caught up in very specific temporal flows. These contexts not only shaped practitioners’ experiences but also some of the work that was generated thereby directly and indirectly affecting the working practices. Theatre practitioners and performance studies academics alike regularly use the term ‘space’ to refer to performance venues. In *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* rehearsals, practitioners referred to theatre rehearsal ‘spaces’; however these ‘spaces’ were in the first case the ‘Function Room’ and in the second case the ‘Art Room’. They were indeed, ‘places’, but not, as

Edward Casey would argue, “some empty and innocent spatial spread[s], waiting, as it were, for cultural configurations to render [them] placeful” (1996:14).

Academics developing tools for performance analysis in professional theatre (as has been stated, this thesis regards the school productions as akin to the professional ones¹), have suggested that the location of a theatre and its style and design will inform framing for audiences (see, for instance, Carlson 1989). McAuley (1999), drawing on Carlson and others, builds on this work by arguing that venues also carry their own framings for practitioners. She suggests this is not only the case for performance places but for rehearsal places too. In her writing on theatre buildings, she spends time discussing backstage and rehearsal areas, pointing out that:

The nature of the rehearsal space, its level of comfort or discomfort, warmth, and the facilities provided, are a further dimension of the physical framing of the participants’ experience and it must be acknowledged that [participants] frequently put up with the physical conditions (McAuley1999:71).

I will also draw on McAuley to discuss the venues where the rehearsals took place. In the next section of this chapter, I will introduce the two venues – schools – and the rehearsal rooms used for *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*. I will then interrogate the participants’ engagement with the places during the day-to-day work. Just as the location of the rehearsal space in the city framed participants’ experience, so did the location of the rehearsal rooms within the school premises.

¹ concerned as a solid production on a theatrical stage with means and procedure very similar to the professional theatre. Pupils are selected after an audition, type casting is practised, and there is an austere concentration on a proper scenic environment and text-oriented acting. (Kakoudaki, 2006: 2)

3.8.1. The Rehearsal Settings of the *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*

Shaun Gurton, an Australian theatre designer, argues that “Venues are everything the venues control what you are doing” (1992:137). This being the case, where were these venues? What were the interiors like? And what were their relationships to the rehearsal places?

All of the processes I documented – main and supplementary – took place in schools located in the Athens’ area. *Fairytale* was based in the South-West of Athens and the *Suitcase* in the North East of Athens. From now on I will concentrate on the main data-collection fieldwork sites: School A and School B.

3.8.2. The schools

School A is an Experimental School, of which there is a long history in Greece¹. These are state schools which, in the past provided opportunity for social mobility in purely meritocratic terms. They were hives for intellectual production and they have been centres where socio-political ideas thrived. At the same time they contributed to the development and implementation of major educational innovations. Simultaneously, they functioned as centres for training teachers.

The aims of the Experimental Schools are:

1. To provide students with a high quality of education;
2. To promote educational research *in situ* in cooperation with university departments;

¹ This is the official website of the Greek Ministry of Education for experimental schools http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/01/peiramatika_protypa1.pdf.

3. To train future teachers and support the professional development of in-service teachers;
4. Experimental application of:
 - a. New curricula;
 - b. Educational material;
 - c. Innovative didactic practices;
 - d. Innovative creative activities;
 - e. New suggestions for the assessment of the curriculum and the logistics of educational institutions;
 - f. Proposed new management models of schools.

School A was located in what is considered as a working class area. McAuley recognises that a “theatre’s surrounding buildings and the activities associated with them add a further dimension to the framing function performed by [and in] the building” (McAuley, 1999:45). Analogically for the schools, where the rehearsals were held - the rehearsal spaces - had an impact on the rehearsal processes. For instance, School A was not a local school as students had to travel from different suburbs to come to it. Consequently, transport arrangements for both students and teachers had to be made prior to each rehearsal.

Rehearsal Room School A

School A’s rehearsal room was located on the fourth floor of the school building. The school itself was old and the classrooms were located on the first three floors. You could reach each floor either by stairs or by lift. On rehearsal days, students and teachers had to use the lift to take them – including me – to the fourth floor. It was Saturday and the school was closed. There were bars on the stairs blocking the entrance to the floors therefore the only way in and out of the building was by lift. The main

entrance of the school was locked after the participants had arrived. If a student or a teacher was late, someone had to go and bring him up.

The room itself was really spacious. It was square with big windows on the left hand side to let the light in. It was full of school chairs in rows. There was a corridor that separated the auditorium into two sections. Facing the other side of the room you could see the stage: elevated, rectangular and very large with an Italian style stage¹ with old red velvet curtains hanging from the ceiling on each side. At the back right there was a stage door that led to one of the school corridors. A piano on the front right hand side dominated the stage and the right-hand curtain would cover its edge. In the middle of the stage, four wooden steps gave access from the auditorium to the stage. The first time I stepped into this space I could not help but think of other students and teachers who had prepared productions here. The stage was empty at that time but is there such a thing as “an empty space” (Brook, 1968) or are spaces filled with evocations of events, productions and rehearsals which have happened earlier?

The entrance to the rehearsal space



¹ Proscenium stage

The stage where the rehearsals took place



Another angle where you see the side of the room and where the music ensemble sits , to the right of the stage



Rehearsal Room School B

Unlike School A, School B was a regular state secondary school, local to the students who at least did not have to make specific travel arrangements as it was just ‘around the corner’ for all of them. One of the teachers drove to come to rehearsals whereas the other lived within walking distance.

This is the entrance to the space; you can see it was a room used as an art space



In contrast to School A, School B’s rehearsal room was located in the basement of the school building. It had no windows, as it was one floor down from the ground floor so you had to turn the lights on. When we left after rehearsals, the students would use their mobile phones as torches to light our way out. A round staircase led to huge double doors which opened into the rehearsal room. When in the room you could bump into arts and crafts objects made by students during school hours: it provided an artistic atmosphere immediately. The room was extended to the left; it was round, long and curvy, with a huge round pillar in its centre which made me think of Atlas holding the earth on his shoulders. An imaginary line crossed the pillar and divided the room into

two sections: the front section was the ‘stage’ and the back was the ‘auditorium’. These imaginary sections were created by the participants themselves. Next to the pillar were two round tables with chairs around them. Before each rehearsal, these chairs would be moved from the table to just behind the imaginary horizontal line for the ‘auditorium’ to be formed. There were no backstage doors in this room, but lots of metallic cupboards – I counted nine of them – filled with arts and crafts made by the students. All the metal cupboards leaned on the walls around the room. Again I could not help but think of all the other activities – all of them artistic – that had taken place and were yet to take place in this room.

This is the area where the rehearsals were held; on the right, the table where the ‘on the table’ process took place.



As well as the students/teachers associating each rehearsal space with its primary function, these same places could not be entirely separated from the theatre spaces where the productions would eventually be performed: throughout the processes, students were continually reminded of the transference of the performance. On one level, each process was geared towards performing elsewhere: the rehearsal rooms had

mocked-up stage dimensions where the practitioners worked, these dimensions being representative of the theatre spaces. Moreover, the rehearsals took place in close proximity to the theatre spaces: both *Fairytale*'s cast and that of *Suitcase* rehearsed just a ten minute walk away from the theatre where the production would be performed. On another level, the participants enjoyed the rehearsal venues more than the theatres and their stages. The participants felt more comfortable in the rehearsal rooms as the theatre spaces unnerved them as they saw them as places where they would be exposed. When School B visited the theatre to get familiar with the space, students felt uneasy and nervous, talking about anything *but* the play.

3.8.3. The Theatres

This is the outside of the civil culture centre where the performance of School B took place in May 2010.



This is where the opening night of the performance of School A took place.



Rehearsals and performances take place within sociocultural and historical contexts. Carlson (1989) and McAuley (1999) argue that theatre buildings – the audience arrangement, the foyers, their physical appearance, the location within the city – are all aspects of an audience's meaning-making experience. I suggested earlier, the same may be said for practitioners participating in a particular production. McAuley makes the point that theatres carry histories and framings. In her project to explore how audiences and practitioners position these buildings socially and culturally, she draws on Vitez's distinction between what he understands as two types of theatre building:

... the shelter and the edifice. In a theatre-shelter you can construct whatever kind of spaces you like, while a theatre-edifice imposes from the outset a certain kind of *mise en scene* ... The edifice says 'I am a theatre', while the shelter points up the transitory nature of all codes or representation. (McAuley, 1999:39)

This distinction between shelter and edifice provides a means to understand the respective histories of the buildings where the performances were presented. However, we need also to understand and rethink fixed concepts of 'established' theatre places: *Fairytale* (School A) in an *en-suite* theatre space contained within the premises of a

private school; *Suitcase* (School B) in an old cinema space, now transformed into a regional cultural centre

The private school where the *en-suite* theatre is located has a 119-year history and was first established in 1893 by French missionaries with permission from the Greek Government. The school is located at the centre of the municipality in a neoclassical building whose architecture dominates the area. The school has a good reputation in terms of schooling and cultural achievements. McAuley argues that “a given venue can come to seem causally connected to a particular kind of performance” (1992:42). Further, Carlson argues that we must study all dimensions of a theatre space in order to understand how an audience makes meaning; Schaefer suggests that it is worth examining the kind of meanings and values that performance practitioners “have literally in-corporated in their decision to affiliate themselves to one particular kind of theatre or performance space than another” (Schaefer, 1999:3). T/Ds for *Fairytale* were aware of what was expected by presenting their production in that particular school: an imposing performance would be expected in an imposing building. T/Ds prepared the students, discreetly, since they were been given this building for the performance they had to meet its demands and good reputation.

The en-suite theatre itself occupied the second floor of the private school. The room itself is cavernous and consists of an Italian stage¹, the auditorium and a gallery. The backstage has two stage doors, one at each side leading to the dressing rooms. Red velvet front-of-house curtains separate to make the viewer a secret observer of stage life. It is fully equipped with lights and sound equipment.

¹ Proscenium stage.

Similarly, the old cinema – now transformed into a regional cultural centre - is found at the centre of its municipality. It has a reputation for hosting quality performances, organising festivals where school theatre productions from all over Attica are presented. Exhibitions also are held in the space. The Function Room enjoys a complex history, both as an entertainment venue and as a site of prolific theatre-making. The insides of the building display this history with old film posters covering many of the foyer's walls and the walls around the entrance with odd props scattered around. T/Ds were aware of what was expected of them by presenting their performance in this venue.

Here is where Vitez's (in McAuley, 1998) distinction becomes interesting. Both of the buildings described above are edifice-like and imposing. Their initial and even current function is not purely theatre. The buildings' histories have 'institutionalised' the spaces and they are now firmly positioned within the realm of theatre-making. The theatre spaces themselves might be understood to be a dialogue between 'shelter' and 'edifice'. As a shelter because both places can be used as any kind of space: exhibitions, dance performances, concerts can be presented there. In Vitez's terms both buildings say 'I am an important building'. However, as an *en-suite* theatre and an old cinema, they are not fixed and established like many other theatre venues but as *milieu* for school theatre they are very significant. What must it be like to have an *en-suite* theatre in your school, one which is not just 'causally connected to a kind of performance' but causally connected with the enculturation of the young people to art? Shaun Gurton said "the venue controls what you are doing" (1992: 137). For this reason both venues were chosen by T/Ds because they were important building in terms of the importance of the events that take place in both of them.

Now that I have described the ‘inanimate’ setting of my research I will continue with the animate material (material that requires people to generate it), the plays and data collection process.

3.9. The plays

“*A Fairytale without a Name*” was written by Iakovos Kambanelis, who died in March 2011. The play was written in 1959 but is still *au courant*. It was rehearsed and performed by School A.

The story: in a far and once glorious, long-ago city, poverty and sadness have taken over. Not knowing what to do, the King asks for financial help from a distant uncle. But the help is not without strings. The uncle wants the kingdom, and from here the story begins. The financial situation of Greece today is known worldwide and the parallels with *Fairytale* are undeniable.

However, when rehearsals started, the Greeks did not qualify for IMF assistance so it was as though the teachers in both schools, and the playwrights before them, had foreseen the future. As Peter Brook states in his book *The Empty Space*, it is the force and the quality of theatre that “enable[s] it to survive way beyond its time.” (Brook, 1968:15). What I mean by that it is not that a play can predict the future, but a powerful and well written play that goes deep to the core of human beings’ existence, has significance beyond the era in which it was written – ancient Greek tragedies and plays by Shakespeare, Chekhov, Brecht, for example.

“*The Boy with a Suitcase*” by Michael Kenny rehearsed and performed by School B.

The story: Naz is 10 and he loves stories. Every night his father reads ‘The Adventures of Sinbad the Sailor’ to him. But Naz’s world is changing; he has to escape his country and begin his own adventure. Faced with mountains, seas, soldiers and wolves, Naz must survive on his own and discover for himself the power of storytelling.

This story is more topical than ever for Greece. Whilst I write this, the situation in Greece, and specifically in Athens, is more difficult than ever regarding refugees and immigrants, especially illegal immigration. A few days prior to the actual performance, three Afro-Americans stabbed a young man to death as he was going to the parking area just opposite his apartment in the centre of Athens to take his wife to the clinic to give birth to their child. In 2010 when the play was in rehearsal, another horrific incident overshadowed the city of Athens. Whilst searching the garbage for food, an Afghan boy was killed by a bomb, placed in a bin. Such events made the play more topical than ever.

In the next section I will explain the coding process (collection and de-coding) used for my data and how I positioned myself in the field. Limitations will also be explored.

3.10. Data Collection

My research of two ethnographic rehearsal cases was based on the following methods of data collection:

3.10.1. Observational Participation

The first technique I used was observation. I observed the rehearsals of two school theatre productions systematically from the beginning of December 2010 until the end of April 2011. I observed 13 rehearsals for each production and each rehearsal

lasted approximately 3 to 4 hours, with intervals. The whole observation was aimed at exploring how the teachers as directors guide the students as actors.

Although there are many taxonomies of observation in relation to the researcher's participation (e.g. Spradley 1980, Descomble 1998), my observation can be described as "observant participation" (Brewer 2000:61). I assumed the role of the researcher (the teachers and the students understood this role from the beginning) who tried to understand how the teachers as directors make theatre in the school context. Although I directly observed how the teachers organised their directorial process and the interaction with the students as actors, I was not 'a fly on the wall' i.e. a passive observer, who did not affect the process of these rehearsals. For example, during the second rehearsal the T/D from *Suitcase* asked me my thoughts on how a S/A's line should be said¹. What made my observation "different than looking" (Simpson and Tuson, 1995:3) was its epistemological framing (Emerson 1981, Jackson 1990, Wragg 1999) and the selection of a specific observation 'unit', as I will show below.

According to Evertson and Green (1986:169), there are four broad ways of recording and storing observations, each one of which is suitable for specific purposes: (1) category systems, (2) descriptive systems, (3) narrative systems and (4) technological records. Each system can be open or closed depending on whether the system: (a) has or does not have present categories, (b) starts with a specific orientation about how meanings are studied, (c) encompasses different subsystems and (d) utilises different techniques of recording. Since my research goal was to observe how teachers as directors guide their students as actors towards the final product of a performance and whether they construct a 'genre' of directing school theatre performances by so doing, I

¹ I will explore my role in the process extensively in a later chapter.

did not use category systems based on the rating scales or checklist, but rather I focused on (2), (3), (4).

3.10.2. Technological recording combined with descriptive system

In order to ‘capture’ what the T/Ds said as well as students’ reaction or action to what was said in the two placements, I decided to use the technique of audio-recording as an open system without pre-set categories in order to “freeze the event in time for analysis at a later point in time” (Evertson and Green, 1986:169). An alternative way would be a video recording but I decided not to use video recording as directors Jonathon Miller and Peter Brook have remarked that “copying meant producing something indistinguishable” (in Melzer, 1995:152) and that a filmed “document is not only incomplete but very false” because it cannot communicate “the full experience of what happened” (in Melzer, 1997:265).

Marco De Marinis wrote fifteen years ago that video was as its best a “faithful betrayal of performance or a respectful forgery of the original”. Following Jacques Le Goff, Michel Foucault and Paul Zumthor, De Marinis argued that “theatrical documents ...like all documents ... [are] subjective, partial, elusive and incomplete” (1985:388). This is not to say that practitioners and scholars undervalue documentation of theatre rehearsal. If anything, documentation, particularly by video, is “proliferating” in the words of the New Theatre Quarterly editors and “causing a revolution in teaching, rehearsal methods and research” (in Melzer, 1995:147). Also as it might:

a) Strengthen what is called the “participant - observer paradox” (see Duranti 1997: 118-119 for a discussion of this paradox): participants do not behave naturally because of the camera which would strongly remind them that somebody is observing them and recording their behaviour and-

b) Offer a selective representation of the classroom interaction depending on where the camera is positioned (see Cavendish et al. 1995 for details). Therefore, a holistic representation requires many cameras which would result in a plethora of data and difficulty in their organisation.

However, the use of audio-recording also has important limitations:

- a. “Loss of important visual cues such as visual expressions, gesture, body language, movement; sound quality can be poor without radio microphones especially if acoustics are poor; analysis time [is] substantially increased” (Wragg, 1999:17).
- b. McAuley has commented on the practicalities and “strategic implications” for would-be documenters; in her experience, one cannot both observe and record sound as “observation is a full time role that precludes taking responsibility for sound recording or camera operation” (McAuley, 1998:81).
- c. During the recording at the placement, students were aware of the audio recording equipment I had put at the side of the stage. Consequently, when they were waiting there for their turn to rehearse, they were cautious about what they said. There were times when they would remind co-students of the presence of the recorder. Sometimes this happened in the course of a joke.

In order to minimise these limitations, I used a *descriptive system*. During the processes I kept what I refer to as a ‘fieldwork diary’ every week, full of raw jottings from the documentation of each rehearsal. I will refer to the subsequent writing up of this initial diary as ‘rehearsal notes’. This is to distinguish the spontaneous note-taking

during the fieldwork from the more reflective, organised material I generated later on. Letzler Cole (1992) adds that in this “technological age” and hidden amidst a team of artists and technicians, her observation experience was “less invasive” than she “originally feared” (1992:3), but as I said above I was not able simply to be ‘a fly on the wall’: even with just a pen and a notebook the observer is still in full view of the artists rehearsing.

As I documented the rehearsals, there was still the occasional insecurity both from students and teachers around what I was writing, on occasion the students explicitly asked, “Since you have the audio recorder why do you have to take notes?” (Rehearsal notes, February, 2010). As Wragg (1999) mentioned above, the audio could not capture the gestures, the facial expressions, the movements or the body expressions but I found myself taken by surprise when I suddenly had to validate my choice of recording tools to the ensemble itself. That is, I had not taken into serious consideration the possibility and probability of a reaction from the students; I might have underestimated their participation; I might, subconsciously, have been thinking of students as ‘tools’ for completing my research¹.

The format of the descriptive system that I used for attending the two rehearsal placements was an open one (see table below), with short descriptions in relation to the temporal organisation of the rehearsals.

¹ I consider this towards the end of my thesis in the Epilogue section.

Date / Observation of classroom interaction/School ...	
Scene	Description

Writing, however, imposes physical limitations. This has important implications for defining the subjects(s) of subsequent analysis. Although I did try to write down as much as possible it was simply not comprehensive. The brain filters and edits conversation as it is heard and written down. I developed a form of shorthand that concentrated on who was talking, who they were talking to and what direction they wanted the rehearsal process to take. As McAuley has pointed out, the limitations of writing means a selective ‘description’ and an ‘analysis’ of what was being said was already taking place (1998:76). As I became increasingly aware of these limitations, some selective decisions were by necessity taken on the spot:

1. I decided not to record the numerous script changes that took place but to concentrate on the dialogue and exchanges between the T/Ds themselves, or between S/As, or S/As and T/Ds. A choice had to be made between one and the other and my decision was to put emphasis on the process.
2. I felt reassured because I had a ‘back up’ tool: the voice recorder. In case I missed something from my paper notes I had ‘my reminder’. Listening to the

process again on the recorder I could immediately recall something I was not clear about or even remember things that I had not given due attention to initially.

For the purposes of the analysis, the data of both technological and descriptive systems were combined since the purpose of the “discourse transcription” (Du Bois *et al.*, 1993:45) of the audio recording is to present the participants’ discourse interactions in both placements.

Of course the question that then arises is just whose process is being observed? I found myself concentrating particularly on recording and then transcribing what the T/Ds said, creating a representation of how I perceived the T/Ds were leading and guiding the two groups. It is therefore fair to say that the documentation was both recorded, in audio and written forms, and transcribed with a view to analysing the T/Ds’ processes in the two ensembles. Such practice does not necessarily validate the documenter’s decision which admittedly is ‘loaded’ in privileging directors over the others participants (McAuley 1998:81). One could for example, alternatively focus the documentation on a particular S/A and how s/he has been changed (if at all) during the process or even a group of S/As. This practice also determines to a large degree the subsequent narrative of the analysis as will be seen later - even when I quote S/As it is invariably in relation to how they work within the T/Ds’ processes.

Ultimately, I took the view in this instance that the T/Ds were the persons responsible for the production as a whole and the dominant authority in the rehearsal rooms. This view was highlighted by all the T/Ds who, on different occasions and periodically, kept reminding the students that they (the T/Ds) would shoulder the blame if something went wrong (Rehearsals, 2010). T/Ds were the primary *loci* of rehearsal

activities; their processes were therefore a convenient centralising point of study. The decision to concentrate on the T/Ds' processes reveal, in Pavis' words, the "intention" of the researcher. Behind this intention lies the "interest, preoccupations and prejudices of the documenters themselves" (Melzer, 1997:264).

According to Gadamer "prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgements, constitute the historical reality of his being" (in Fischer-Lichte, 1991:207). For instance, my interest, preoccupation, prejudice and being are admittedly reflective of my own work as a T/D. Fischer-Lichte writes that the "location of the interpreter both in history and in his or her biography determines the process of interpretation" (*ibid*: 207). I hereby acknowledge therefore that this is a partial rendering of the whole rehearsal process as there are potentially many differing stories that can be told, depending on the perspective, values and knowledge possessed by the participant observer.

I will now expand on the ways I collected my data and I will come back to how I interpreted the data later in this chapter.

3.10.3. Narrative System

I also used a narrative system, a "field journal" in Carspecken's terms (1996:45) for recording information about:

1. *Key events arising from the school.* For example, one day as I was giving a lift home to some students, during a trivial conversation it was revealed that it was the students themselves who had initiated the school theatre play for that particular year as the teacher had no intention of doing it¹.

¹ I will give more details in the next chapter when analysing the processes.

2. *Key events arising from the rehearsal room.* For example, during the rehearsal break, the teachers would come and ask me my views on how the rehearsal was going and if there was something else that could be done and if I had any suggestions¹.

Additionally, observers of rehearsals have commented that important things are often said by participants over breaks. For instance, in two of the productions she observed, McAuley regretted not having a camera outside the rehearsal room, in a “marginal space” where “key performance decisions emerged” (McAuley, 1998:79). The relaxation of a break away from work and/or away from recording seems to provide a brief loosening of any inhibitions or concerns on the part of the participants. I remember that there were moments during rehearsal breaks when the students would ask me if the recorder was on or not. It was obvious that they were aware of its presence. This is an example of where, whether in the field or in the laboratory, the individual researcher can sometimes go where the camera cannot. However, in my experience, what is then said to, or in the presence of the researcher will depend very much on what sort of relationship and what sense of trust the latter has built up with the participants. Letzler Cole noted that company members “during breaks in rehearsal ... spoke to her fairly unselfconsciously and spontaneously” (Cole, 1992:3) after they had become accustomed to her presence.

However, descriptive and narrative notes have two main dangers in that they may: (1) generalize and not focus on specific issues and (2) use a “quick” explanation and an abstract vocabulary. As Agar explains:

¹ I will explore further the ‘insider/outsider’ dichotomy of the ethnographic territory at a later stage of this thesis.

Field notes, then, are a problem. In their worst form, they are an attempt to vacuum up everything possible, either interrupting your observation to do so or distorting the results when retrieving them from long-term memory. Not that you shouldn't keep notes, but they should be more focused in topic, and they should eventually be made obsolete. (Agar, 1996:12)

What I tried to do was to write down these notes as quickly as possible after the relevant events using a low-level or concrete vocabulary that limited the level of the possible interpretation I was making subconsciously.

3.10.4. Semi-structured interviews with the teachers

Interviews were also an important method of data collection in my ethnographic work exploring how theatre-making is constructed in a school theatre process. Specifically, these interviews were mainly used for understanding the teachers' theatrical backgrounds in terms of directing school theatre productions, acting in out-of-school performances or participating in school or community or professional theatre productions in any capacity. The interviews were intended not just to focus on descriptions of "what they do in the making of school theatre", but also on their explanations of their own practices.

My interviews with the teachers of the rehearsal cases can be described as semi-structured (Mason 2002, Legard *et al.* 2003) based on an everyday conversational style. I chose to do two interviews with T/Ds: one at the beginning and one at the end of the process. The audio-recorded interviews took place at the schools and the time was chosen by T/Ds so that it was convenient for them. I conducted the first interview a week after the rehearsals had started in order to discuss the preparation of the process and any prior experience. I chose not to ask T/Ds what they were thinking of the progress of their current rehearsal experiences, since I had decided to conduct the second retrospective interview after the performance had been staged. These first interviews

were approximately 30 minutes long for each teacher. The questions I had constructed prior to these interviews and their *foci* are presented in the appendix¹. The questions were grouped as follows:

Groups/Relations	Follow up Questions	Example(s)
A. Generalist teacher and theatre in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Occasionally b. Anniversarial c. Permanent d. Previous Experience e. Impetus 	What kind of plays have you directed throughout your career as a teacher?
B. Teacher-centred or team-co-operative approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Play choice b. Aim of work c. Way of working d. Handling conflicts/arguments 	<p>What made you choose this particular play?</p> <p>Do you do all the directing yourself?</p>
C. Means and assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Deciding on the stage setting b. Music c. Costumes d. School e. Colleagues 	<p>If your play includes music and dance do you rehearse in the classroom as well?</p> <p>Where do you get the costumes from?</p>
D. Spatio-temporality of rehearsals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Space b. Time c. Audience d. Co-operators 	<p>About the audience: who comes to the play?</p> <p>When do you do your rehearsals?</p>

After the opening nights for both plays I collected reflective interviews which lasted approximately 10 minutes. In these interviews I asked the teachers to evaluate

¹ At the appendix 3.

themselves and also their co-T/D's work. I asked the teachers to give "a reflection on [the] action" (Schon 1987, 26).

Sample question: what did you gain from your co-operation with your colleague?

I used the teachers' own explanations and reviews to understand how they reflect other people's practice and to see their perspective, namely why they did "X" and not "Y" and what they would do differently. In this way, I could construct a 'dialogue' between perspectives, that is, T/Ds appraisal of their colleagues and my conclusions about the same, based on the information I had collected from the audio recordings and my observational notes.

3.10.5. Supplementary Observations

I conducted supplementary observations in five different schools to validate or even challenge my own findings from the main placements. In these cases I was a "visible researcher/observer" and, while I did not have the time to get to know the T/Ds, both they and the students were informed beforehand of what I was doing. I found the additional observations also raised more questions and this fundamentally challenged the concept I was investigating - of teacher as director - and shaped and strengthened my belief in the aim of this thesis: to provide a model for building on school theatre rehearsals and ways of putting on school performances.

I had initially underestimated the importance of supplementary observations because I did not think that one performance would be capable of offering valuable findings, but I had not considered the 'power of the moment'. The teacher and students knew that I would observe them only during one rehearsal process and they probably tried their best to help me in my research as they knew that they would not have another chance to impress 'the stranger'. You could see the intensity in the teachers' faces.

It is worth mentioning how one of these supplementary observations, undertaken in the preliminary stages of my research, shaped and strengthened my belief in the aim of this thesis to provide a basis for T/D training and information-sharing about school theatre issues:

It is March 2010 and the teacher and the students were rehearsing in the school hall. To observe the rehearsal, I went to the school auditorium and took a centre seat. The students and their teacher were preparing themselves to begin the rehearsal. I saw them setting up the acoustics and preparing the microphones. I observed that the teacher asked the students to do this so they would become familiar with the technicalities of the performance.

The rehearsal started, students were moving their mouths and moving their hands pointing either to the right or left, or shaping circles with their hands up above to emphasise the lines they were lip synching. The voices I could hear through the speakers were not live, they were students' lines recorded by the teacher.

(Extract from rehearsals notes 15th March 2010, in one of my supplementary observations neither in School A nor B).

I was surprised. It was the first time I had observed something like this: recorded voices and students acting like puppets. Interested to find out the teacher's perspective, at the end of the rehearsal, I asked the teacher why he had recorded the students' lines. He said that on the day of the performance, he would play the recorded voices so the audience would hear this pre-recorded text rather than the voices of the students 'live'. In all my years of working as a teacher I had not come across such a lack of trust in students' abilities to reach the required standard of voice projection. This teacher's trepidation mirrored previous experiences I had had of teachers' reluctance to put on TiS.

At the schools where I worked, I noticed a nervousness amongst the teachers when it came to putting on a play. Either they would not have knowledge about the chosen play or, if one was not already selected, they were unsure of how to find a suitable and interesting one for students. This lack of confidence and even lack of

knowledge, on how to choose and put on a play often resulted in them doing something “parapleromatic”¹ to a theatrical play: a small performance where the children recite lines from poems about a celebratory event, such as the National Celebration of the 28th October or any other of the five annual school events.

This led me to question which party is the most important in TiS? Is it the T/D, the audience or the S/As? Are the students puppets in the hands of the T/D? What is the role of the T/D? Is s/he obliged to teach theatre? If so, who demands it and why? Is it a creative role that s/he undertakes willingly, or is it a task that s/he was asked to carry out without proper regard for the outcomes? One could argue that the teacher who requires his students to mime to voice recordings was introducing them to a different approach, another way of looking at theatre. Is it the teacher’s duty to teach a range of theatre techniques and skills? Is it part of his job to teach students how to act, and is theatre more than merely acting?

The interrogation above reveals the variety of discourses and practices in which T/Ds are engaged during the rehearsal period. The understanding of and approaches to making TiS are inextricably embedded in rich and complex contexts; it is not enough to understand the rehearsal processes solely in terms of S/As and T/Ds creating lines and scenes. I hope my research will shed light on the above questions, and others generated by my research, which will enable a more profound and thorough analysis of TiS approaches to be made.

¹ Added or inserted in order to fill out something (Webster dictionary).

3.10.6. Securing the Quality of the Research

Research quality, which in quantitative research is described as *validity* and *reliability*, is a substantial factor in conducting successful research. Generally speaking, validity refers to the truthfulness of research evidence while reliability refers to the stability of that evidence. However, epistemologically these terms seem to be concepts of specific weight, since not only do they have different meanings in different epistemologies (Kirk and Miller 1986, Beck 1994) but they also refer to different research stages (see Hitchcock and Hughes 1995 for details). The fact that ethnographic or generally qualitative studies do not aim to create an objective picture, or a general law as in positivist studies, does not imply that qualitative research should not present specific standards of quality and a flexible rational basis (see Hammersley 1999 for a useful discussion). As Geertz explains:

I have never been impressed by the argument that, as complete objectivity is impossible in these matters (as, of course, it is) one might as well let one's sentiment run loose. As Robert Solow has remarked, that is like saying that as a perfectly aseptic environment is impossible, one might as well conduct surgery in a sewer. (Geertz, 1970:30)

Since communicative research cannot be regarded as “‘bricolage’¹ which is less ‘objective’. ‘empirical’ or ‘rigorous’” (Freebody, 2003:69), different researchers have proposed different standards of what makes qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Eisenhart and Howe 1992, Creswell 1998) or ethnography (Hammersley 1990) “good”. For example, Lincoln and Gubna have argued that trustworthiness (what is usually called reliability in qualitative studies) refers to:

- Credibility: findings which have a kind of ‘truth’;

¹ ... (in art or literature) construction or creation from a diverse range of available things: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/bricolage>.

- Transferability: findings which can have applications in other contexts;
- Dependability: consistent findings which could be repeated;
- Confirmability: a degree of neutrality in the findings (not shaped by researchers' bias or interests) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:289-331).

In order to secure the quality of my research I followed two principles:

1. According to Carspecken (1996), *validity* in qualitative research is not based on logical premises that may or may not be true. On the contrary, validity is linked to the procedures and conditions that allow a research claim to gain a consensus between the researcher and his/her audience, what McAuley called 'trust' between the participants. These procedures and conditions are then linked to adequate evidence that make researchers' claims and arguments substantial and coherent. As Hymes (1996) writes in relation to the field of Ethnography Communication:

... the Validity of Knowledge about persons, families, neighbourhoods, schools and communities ... depends upon accurate and adequate knowledge of meanings they impute from terms, events, persons and institutions. To an important extent, such meanings cannot be taken for granted as uniform, even within a single city or school district, nor as known in advance. The overt forms may be familiar – the words, the attire, the buildings – but the interpretation given to them is subject to shift, to deepening, to fresh connecting up. (Hymes, 1996:9)

In order to secure my findings:

- a. I used theoretical positions that helped me understand my data in advance, e.g. a formulation of Foucault's concept of Discourse.
- b. I combined an exploration of two ethnographic rehearsal cases with a document-based investigation (interviews).

2. While validity is considered 'high' in ethnographic studies, their *trustworthiness* is usually considered as 'low' (Brewer, 2000). Trustworthiness is based on the researcher's capacity to implement and justify his/her research questions, the data collection process and the way that analysis presents believable and valuable arguments and findings.

Although I selected an intermittent time mode for collecting data from two case studies as well as from a specific number of official texts accompanying said cases, the studies themselves can be considered a piece of research subject to limitation, when the research goal is the construction of a kind of 'generalisation', as I have already explained, (ibid p.66, Mitchell, 1984). My purpose was not a full description or a theory of how theatre-making is constructed but an analysis of specific rehearsal cases in order to examine the complex relations between the animate and inanimate matter with make up these cases.

Clifford states that ethnographic knowledges are inherently partial, committed and incomplete (Clifford, 1986). Noting a common tendency to combine true knowledge and meaning, Trinh (1991) asserts that:

truth, even when 'caught up on the run', does not yield itself either in names or in frames (filmic); and meaning should be prevented from coming to closure as what is said and what is showed. Truth and meaning: the two are likely to be equated with one another. Yet, what is put forth as truth is often nothing more than a meaning. (Trinh, 1991: 30)

Such a position recognises that there is no privileged vantage point from which a researcher can survey a culture or cultural objects. Thus, an ethnographic process is replaced by admittedly partial, particularised and conditional accounts of specific encounters within and between different cultures.

Under this prism, I will explain how I extracted and decoded all the material I had collected throughout the months of observing and recording at the two main placements, as well as the supplementary observation.

3.11. The procedure of data processing (de-coding the field material)

Reconstructing how theatre making was constructed in these two rehearsal cases was not a linear process but a complex and messy one. Michael Jackson (1996) describes the fieldwork as ‘messy’; the actor, Simon Callow, writes of rehearsal as ‘murky’ (1984:163): both the *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* processes were specifically complex, with many “exploratory” descriptions and analyses of themes and patterns seen across the collected data.

After many readings of my data – transcriptions¹, interviews and my notes - I began with ‘how’ questions, leaving the ‘why’ questions for later (Silverman, 2001: 297:298). I continuously tried to find different patterns across data which could help me understand the effect of the institutionalised structure that the T/Ds work within and the strategies that T/Ds behaviourally embodied in rehearsal in order to achieve the transformation of the play to the stage.

The directing processes in *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* were often framed through a discourse of ‘discovery’ and its associated analogies. Specifically, there were two separate but linked ideas: “discovering meaning in the text” which was bound up with

¹ Transcriptions were made in Greek and later translated into English by the researcher. As mentioned, the transcription itself includes the researcher’s interpretation through translation. I will explore and investigate this issue further in the analysis chapters.

remaining faithful to the playwright's original work¹; and "discovering people", which constituted psychological excavations where the job of the T/Ds was to help S/As to uncover the underlying characteristics – conscious and subconscious – of the characters they were playing.

'Finding the playwright's meaning' was how rehearsal practice began and, in both placements, the scripts were treated as sites of autonomous facts that simply had to be revealed. Potts, locating what she calls key 'performance paradigms', explains that during the initial read-through of the playscript and the subsequent discussion:

... questions get asked which make a frame-work of enquiry for weeks to come. Discussion might be as broad as the overall themes of the play or as specific as the interpretation of a single line. (Potts, 1995:94)

... or of a single word. I remember an occasion when the T/D in School B stopped the reading-through process and discussed with the students if they could replace a single word from the playscript with one "more appropriate, which could attribute the meaning better" (Petros from the rehearsal, field notes 22 February, 2010). This discussion lasted for at least 20 minutes².

The sense of fixed meanings or "fixed points" (Lecoq, 1987:100) was partially due to *Fairytale's* and *Suitcase's* directors' particular approach towards the playscripts. The script was treated as a given, and with that came a lot of pre-determined decisions: *this* is the story we are telling; *this* is what will be enacted and *this* is what will be recounted; *this* is the number of entrances and exits and *these* characters enter and exit from these places; *this* is how the characters are to move; and *these* are the sound

¹ Potts devotes a section of her thesis to examining what she identifies as seven linked discourses concerning interpretation and authorship in theatre rehearsals. These include: serving the play; not imposing a meaning on the text; discovering the playwright's intentions; contacting the playwright's impulse; allowing the play to speak through you; the director getting inside the playwright's head; and having the playwright being proud of the theatre practitioners (1995: 22-40).

² In the next chapter I will present more examples of 'excavating' the characters' inner intentions.

effects. However, the process often deviated from this regular path. Sometimes, I heard metaphors of ‘tweaking’ lines, or ‘shaping’ exchanges and of ‘driving scenes through’. These discourses are a departure from the playwright’s intention of uncovering people’s psychologies but were understood – albeit not always by the students¹ – as constructing meaning.

A rehearsal analysis potentially offers the opportunity to analyse rehearsal as both performance-oriented and as a process. My analysis focuses on how the practitioners themselves framed their own work. In *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*, the T/Ds slipped between discourses of ‘discovery’ and ideas about putting the performance together; it is their categorisations and ‘key incidents’ that emerged from the work that structure the subsequent analysis.

Once the performers – T/Ds and S/As – and all the other people that have helped with the production – headteachers, local authorities and parents – have completed their work, the rehearsal analyst’s work really begins. This is when s/he “must shift the gears and turn to the written record s/he has produced with an eye to transforming the collection of materials into writing that speaks to a wider, outside audience” (Emerson *et al*, 1995:142). However, before I continue to explain how I decoded my material, it is worth mentioning Trinh’s distinction between ethnographers “speaking about” and “speaking to”. She claims that “speaking about” arms the ethnographer with the mastery of the field s/he explores. This mode of speaking:

... secures for the speaker a position of mastery; I am in the midst of a knowing, acquiring, deploying world – I appropriate, own and demarcate my sovereign territory as I advance – while the ‘other’ remains in the sphere of acquisition. Truth is the instrument of a mastery which I exert over areas of the unknown as I gather them within the fold of the known (Trinh, 1991:12).

¹ See the section “Students As Actors”.

On the other hand, according to Trinh, “speaking to” is a form of mediation. The ethnographer is the mediator between the subjects and the wider outside world. S/he is there to tell the story itself. At the same time though, s/he is acting profoundly as a storyteller who allows other voices, besides the one telling the story, to be heard. In the case of ethnography the researcher needs to leave space for the participants, to allow them to talk about themselves. Here we see again the issue of subjectivity and objectivity which will be explored later in this thesis.

In writing this thesis, it proved unavoidable for me not to switch between “speaking about” and “speaking to” as there were moments when the roles of mastering the field and being mastered by the field were indistinguishable; for example, I was introduced by the teacher in School A as “Dionysis, a teatrologist from London”¹ which immediately created an image of the researcher as an “expert” or master amongst the students and simultaneously created distance between us. At the same time, however, I realised I was mastered by the field in that I was in its command because I had to follow what was happening there. However, as the months of rehearsals went by, I became “one of the team” to the extent that my name was even mentioned on the programme distributed on the premiere day, something I was unaware of beforehand.

The result of the above ‘messy’ (Jackson 1996) fieldwork process is that the writing in this thesis moves in and out of each of the processes, sometimes jumping between descriptions and sometimes considering the two school theatre ensembles together in order to reflect on broader sociocultural contexts. It is important here to say that this switching was not as a result of me choosing the ‘easiest’ path, but rather an ethnographer’s decision to use the material available to make the best meaning of the phenomena being studied.

¹ (Petros, 1st day of attended rehearsals, 7th December, 2009).

First I had to transcribe all the recorded material I had taken throughout the rehearsals. I then had to cross-reference my fieldnotes with the transcribed material taken on the same day and align a field note with a particular part of the transcription. Sometimes there were entries in the field notes that did not refer or correspond to any transcribed material. They were just thoughts, questions or ideas raised by the observed process.

I looked at:

- The notebooks I had filled with jottings and notes;
- The transcribed material from the rehearsals;
- The interviews I had conducted before the rehearsals with the T/Ds;
- The interviews I had conducted after the play had opened.

Wondering where to start, I turned to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (1995) who suggest several strategies for dealing with the mountain of data a researcher has created and collected. The authors recommend reading through the field material, elaborating and refining earlier insights and ideas “by subjecting this broader collection of fieldnotes [and other material] to close, intensive reflection and analysis” (Emerson & al, 1995:142). The researcher must code his/her material. Emerson *et al* advise two coding phases: *open coding*, where the researcher “reads fieldnotes line by line to identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes or issues they suggest, no matter how varied and disparate” (*ibid*: 143); and *focused coding*, where the researcher “subjects fieldnotes to fine-grained, line-by-line analysis on the basis of topics that have been identified as of particular interest” (*ibid*: 143). Before, proceeding to the coding I found it useful to follow their suggestion and “to undertake an analytically motivated reading” of my material approaching my “notes as

if they had been written by a stranger¹" (*ibid*: 145). According to Emerson *et al*, it is very important for the researcher to distance him/herself from the set of knowledges that may, over time, have become familiar. Although the main ideas of my research were familiar to me: theatre, school, the teacher becoming a director, I was unfamiliar with:

- Examining other people's practices;
- Explaining other people's work in a way that would be interesting to people other than themselves; (Geertz, 1983)
- Interpreting people's ideas and practices;
- Interrogating my own notes.

As to this latter, I adopted Emerson *et al*'s suggested question framework using these to start and complete my analysis:

- What are people doing?
- What are they trying to accomplish?
- How, exactly, do they do this?
- What specific means and/or strategies do they use?
- How do members talk about, characterise, and understand what is going on?
- What assumptions are they making?
- What do I see going on here?
- What did I learn from these notes?
- Why did I include them?" (*ibid*: 146)

I will ground my analysis in "thick description" (Geertz, 1973:12). Thick description was first used in ethnography in the sense of the more data the better. I agree with Kuper (1987) who advocates that:

¹ I will talk extensively in a separate section about the strangeness of fieldwork. Or as what Rosemanith refers to as "the outsideness" and the "insideness" of the documenter.

... thick description should be thought of as open-ended, a layering of meaning in which any bit of behaviour or any statement about human phenomena can always be further contextualised and interpreted by the next human who comes along (Kuper, 1987: 133).

Hence the field material I have collected during the months of my research could be interpreted differently based on the variables each researcher wants to examine and explore. My research focus, however, is to explore T/Ds' positions in the two placements and how they dealt with the problems¹ that came up during the rehearsal periods.

What proved important for coding my material was what Emerson calls "key incidents" (2004:457). Key incidents seem, according to Emerson, to be essential in grounding ethnographic analyses. "Key incidents suggest and direct analysis in ways that ultimately help to open up significant, often complex lines of conceptual development" (2004: 457). For example, in reading and re-reading my material I resisted leaping to an overall idea even though I possessed many predetermined ideas as a result of my theatre and teaching background. I did not want to exclude myself from living new experiences that might appear in the research field, and I allowed ideas to grow from the observational jottings and the notes and interviews. As I have mentioned previously, my focus was on the T/Ds without excluding of course any developing relationships among the participants.

Key incidents extracted from the material are:

1. Teacher confidences and insecurities: knowing what they are doing and the aims they would like to achieve. For example: one T/D from School A could organise the paraphernalia and more practical things of the rehearsal such as the props

¹ The term problematic (coined by Althusser 1971) refers to the process of asking, searching, collecting data, acting within specific theoretical and methodological frames which make this process meaningful and coherent.

needed but she lacked the ability to direct. The other teacher in this school was more aware of using theatrical techniques although she had the courage to admit her weaknesses whilst being aware of the things she knew how to do well: creating and running warm-up exercises, for example.

2. T/Ds' directing approaches: Cole describes and explores the various metaphors given to the directors by the participants. (see page 68)

It was interesting to observe many of the above identities being attributed to T/Ds¹ by the students. For instance Katerina, one of the two directors in School A, would talk with students about personal matters as a personal advisor. In some cases she would speak to students' parents to reassure them about the rehearsal time and to arrange that she would drive students back home. In School B, students attributed additional negative metaphors that Cole did not mention in her text such as "bad", "yeller", "strict". However based on experience these characterisations applied more to the T/D in their role as a *teacher*².

3. Each teacher had specific functions to fulfil according to the skills and approaches they felt most confident about and which had been acquired either through attending seminars or through professional experience. For instance Maria, from School B, was the T/D who would analyse and explain lines which were not fully understood by the students. Sophia, from School A would start the rehearsal with warm up exercises, many taken from a seminar on theatrical games she had attended a few months before she started directing the play.

¹ I will examine extensively these characteristics in the "Teacher as Director" Section.

² More on this in the "Teacher as Director" Section.

4. Teachers giving up. At some point, teachers in both schools had to leave rehearsals. They were so stressed about how the rehearsal was progressing that they thought it would be better if they left, even though this action put more stress on the students.

There were more, significant incidents that took place during the rehearsal and I will deal with them and those already mentioned above, in the analysis chapters that follow. However, even in the early stages of the fieldwork, I could see key issues emerge, amongst which were:

- Helping a student build his/her character;
- Teacher as director: directing the TiS play;
- The role of music, props, costumes in TiS. Live or recorded performance or both?
- How do the T/Ds direct students to play adult roles?

For me, the writing process serves as another level of data analysis. As I tried to organise data material into a homogenous narrative, I continued to analyse the information I had collected. The writing process and the feedback I received on draft essays and sections challenges me to make sure the key incidents I was asserting were present in the data. To reiterate, data analysis was and still is a constant process of discovery, folded into information gathering and writing.

3.12. Limitations

There are limitations to my research and I consider it important to be aware of these and to acknowledge them. For my research I distinguish two kinds of limitations: the indigenous and the exogenous.

Indigenous Limitations

Indigenous limitations are these that resulted from the research itself. Some indigenous limitations pre-existed and have already been mentioned: myself, for example, my ‘prejudices’ (Melzer, 1997); my ‘presumptions’ (McAuley 1998); coming from the same background as the subjects of the investigation¹; the ‘intention’ of the documenter (Pavis, 1991), whereas others emerged during the process. For example as I was engaged in an interpretative procedure, I unavoidably had to decide to document some things and disregard others. The process of coding and writing the fieldnotes is like “doing justice” (Jackson, 1996:43) to the weeks and weeks of the rehearsals. While my focus was primarily on the T/Ds’ practices I assume that I have missed some of the S/As’ interactions or student-to-student interaction – when students were out of role - in the rehearsal room or outside of the rehearsal. I am also sure that I must have missed teacher/student, teacher/teacher discussion taking place within school hours at times when I wasn’t there.

Writing tends to impose a serial or sequential linearity and uni-dimensional flatness onto the rehearsal process. Rehearsal as a ‘doing’ procedure involves speaking, moving, methodical script analysis, the seated bodies, the moments of boredom, moments of fun, moments of creation and the pulsing adrenaline, improvising,

¹I will speak extensively on reflexivity and my position towards the end of this thesis.

choreographing and conceptualising. These practices construct verbal, visual, kinaesthetic, proxemic and aural systems. I am attempting to describe and critically analyse the rehearsal placements within the constraints of language which actually is linear while the processes themselves are multi-dimensional and multi-directional and I know that this is not an easy task.

In this section I will mention an additional layer regarding my research and this is the issue of translating the data. What are the pitfalls in trying to translate from one language to another whilst at the same time striving to maintain as accurately as possible the information embedded in the original language?

McLeish (2003) mentions that no translation can ever fully represent the original. In earlier times, translation was regarded as at best irrelevant and at worst impertinent. In the Middle Ages the core of translation work was for church use, and that, for the reasons of dogma and interpretations the sacred writings, had to be rendered as literally as possible. ‘Fidelity’ in translation means that you have to remain as close to literal translation regarding international traffic such as contracts, instruction manuals, appointment diaries, menus and airport signs.

What happened though with the data I had to translate and the transcription from the recorded data I gathered from all these weeks in my fieldwork? McLeish claims that “literary translation”, that is my transcribed and translated data, “is a subjective and ephemeral art” (2003:28). The difficulty with the translation arose from the natures of the two languages. Greek is a language which is full of precise rhythmic nuances. English by contrast is organised by stress and its sounds are brisker. (McLeish, 2003). “Greek is a language of accumulation. English uses unaccreted words and a minimum of syntax” (*ibid*). And then my questions raised: “How could I in translating my notes ensure I maintained reliable data?”

First I speak good English. Second the difficulty was not “principally the ideas or cultural awareness, since these can be studied in the abstract” (*ibid*). I had in mind that I had not necessarily replicated all the problems in my own language. What I had to retain though was the quality of what had been said during the collection of the data.

I will now explain this in terms of what I call “dual subjectivity”. I conducted my research in my homeland, Greece. I collected all the data in Greek. There were instances when I took notes in English as I thought at that particular time what I was noting was better expressed in that language. I then translated all the data into English in case my supervisors wanted to see what I had been observing and tracking in Greece. It was a double and often triple-layered challenge: observation, notation and translation. Having translated the data it was like seeing it through an additional lens, subjectivity into subjectivity. Thus the act of translating my data gave it additional resonance and value.

Exogenous limitations.

The exogenous limitations are those which had nothing to do with the process but still had a great impact on it. For example, students had limited time to dedicate to the rehearsal process - some had out-of-school activities such as piano lessons, private lessons to support them with their homework - and others had parents who forbade them to spend more than a specific amount of time at rehearsal due to other obligations. Parental support is recognised as a factor in fostering extra-curricular involvement (Jordan & Nettles, 2000) and I witnessed teachers phoning parents and struggling to convince them to allow their children to stay half an hour longer for rehearsal. (Fieldnotes, 2010)

The socio-political situation in Greece at that time was another important exogenous limitation given the parallels between both plays’ subject matter and

contemporary reality. In the case of School B, a recent bombing incident in which an immigrant was killed raised huge discussions and arguments between the students and teachers. In the case of School A, T/Ds and S/As had ongoing discussions about the necessity of IMF support for Greece in January 2010, the time when the School A production was in rehearsal. As I have mentioned, School A's play was about a corrupt country which resulted in the borrowing of money from abroad. The two examples above align with Ian Maxwell's (2001a) description of how a crisis during rehearsals unexpectedly foregrounded the sociological dimension of such artistic activity. Indeed, there were times that the whole group, in each school, was involved in major discussions about these two events. These discussions occupied a big part of the scheduled rehearsal time but proved fruitful for all the participants, T/Ds, S/As and the researcher. In many cases the T/D would provoke discussions in order to give group members the chance to talk, to explore and challenge their own ideas - my ideas too, my own biases. These biases I discuss in detail in chapter 8.

3.13. Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the methodological perspective of my research. I discussed some important epistemological and methodological issues of this perspective as well as the design of data collection, the research quality and the procedure of data de-coding. However ethnographic studies are generally criticised for having weak validity and reliability (see LeCompte and Goetz 2001 for discussion on this). An example of such weakness from my own ethnographic research which ran for a five month period (from December 2009 to the end April 2010) was how, without previous knowledge of the groups' behaviour, could I check if the participants had behaved 'naturally'?

Participating in school theatre rehearsals at more than two schools and following their processes for the whole school year could possibly reveal more complex issues in school theatre-making, for example, through more dynamic student participation and decision-making. What would happen if schools could offer more facilities, such as money, better equipped rehearsal rooms, extra time and additional space. What could and would have happened if S/As had more free time to devote to the process? What if T/Ds were free from teaching obligations? However, my research goal in this thesis was to examine, from an ethnographic perspective, an ethnography '*in situ*' – the making of a school theatre production through observing T/Ds' practices and method(s) in a school setting.

CHAPTER 4: From Teacher to Drama Teacher to Director

4.1. Introduction

The acting practices in *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* were often framed through a discourse of ‘discovery’ and its associated tropes. Specifically, there were two separate but linked ideas: of ‘discovering’ meaning in the text, which was bound up with remaining faithful to the playwright’s work, and discovering people, which constituted psychological approaches for both the T/Ds and S/As. Directors tried to lead students to reveal the underlying intentions of the characters or to explain the behaviours of the characters they portrayed. ‘Finding the playwright’s meaning’ was how the rehearsal practice began at the table and, in both processes, the scripts were treated as sites of autonomous facts that simply have to be recovered so as to be brought to light life.

Potts calls “rehearsal paradigms” the process of making and asking “questions ... which make a framework for the weeks to come. Discussions might be as broad as the overall themes of the play or as specific as the interpretation of a single line” (Potts, 1995:94). For instance, during the *Suitcase* rehearsal period, the previously mentioned death of an Afghan boy looking in street bins for food was brought up for discussion in the rehearsal room and triggered enormous discussion about refugees and illegal immigrants. It raised really big issues such as “What does the state do for immigrants?”, “Are they protected by the law, and if so, how?”, “How do indigenous people behave towards ‘foreign’ people?”. The entire rehearsal time was spent reflecting on these issues and this discussion changed the nature and the direction of the whole production since everyone now seemed more sensitive to and aware of what was going on in the play. Similarly, during the *Fairytale* rehearsal period, discussions and arguments were taking place in the wider community about Greece’s potential entry into the IMF. When

entry was finalised, directors and students agreed to add a line into the play mentioning and commenting on the current political situation.

In both processes, the entire script was read through at the start of the rehearsals, including all the stage directions for the S/As and this immediately suggested a fixed performance practice in terms of how the playtext would be used. Both scripts were treated as a given and with that came a lot of predetermined decisions¹: this is the story we are telling; this is what will be enacted and this is what will be recounted; this is the number of entrances and exits, and these characters enter and exit from these places; this is how the characters are to move; and this is the suggested music.

In rehearsals, for T/Ds the ‘finding the meaning’ process became inextricably connected with ‘discovering character’, where the S/As searched for interpretation of the text and adopted psychological approaches of the roles. Moreover, this subsequently became an exercise of self-excavation and they made connections with their real life. For instance, a student during the ‘analysis’ of her role exclaimed: [“It is like doing literacy” (Student from rehearsal, 12 May 2010).

However, the practitioners not only operated within a paradigm of ‘discovering’ a character’s inner and outer characteristics, but also within a very pragmatic idea that they were constructing a performance; Petros, in his interview states very firmly: “the aim was clear: the performance” (Petros interview, June 2010). As the practitioners rehearsed, they engaged in physical movements and sequences; they manipulated their vocal deliveries, and they co-ordinated elements of production such as props, exits with music and lines with music. Sometimes, I heard metaphors such as ‘spit it out’ ‘throw it to him’, ‘let’s make it’. These discourses and practices were not thought of in terms of

¹ Some re-planning did take place as the rehearsals progressed but I will discuss it later in this chapter.

finding out the playwright's intentions or uncovering people's psychologies but were understood to be part of constructing a performance. This 'constructing a performance' discourse departed from the notion of an inward psychological approach for the S/As, which might be difficult for students at this age to understand in exploring the complexity of a theatrical character. The T/Ds not only focussed on internal states but also shaped external characteristics that they expected would be interpreted by the audience.

In the following pages I will write about the many discourses I found in the two processes. My work focuses on how practitioners constructed their performances and framed their own work. In *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* T/Ds and S/As slipped between discourses of 'discovery' and ideas about putting the performance together, and it is their categorisation that structures the following analysis.

4.2. Teachers act as Directors or Teachers as Directors¹

4.2.1. Dramaturgies, Rehearsal Schedules and Performance Choices

The rehearsals I documented treated the playtext as a completed structure which, as McAuley writes, "has to be broken down and reassembled" (McAuley, 1999: 140). The T/Ds undertook the main responsibility to carve up the playscripts in particular ways and, as will be explored in this section, this had enormous implications beyond simply how the scenes would be constructed for performance. In the two processes, the dramaturgies, that is how the drama in the play was progressing or been formed by the playwright, largely informed the scheduling of S/As' rehearsals, and this scheduling in

¹ Here I separate the act the T/Ds were doing from what a director does as a profession. The reason for that was a comment made by Katerina in her interview when she said "I would not call myself a director" (Katerina interview, June 2010)

turn was responsible for some of the meanings that were eventually generated in performance.

The playscript of *The Fairytale Without a Name* was written by Iakovos Kampanellis in 1959 and is set in a fictional/fairytale kingdom somewhere in the world. It revolves around the king's family and his people; the play follows the king's fall and his people's corruption, only for self-awareness and self-respect to win at the end. The play is a departure from naturalism in that it uses a heightened fairytale and poetic style. The script is divided into five acts. The playtext involves 25 characters, and each scene involves a large number of people; indeed it is rare that a section of script features only two or three people without numerous interruptions from other characters. Scene division and reconstruction were major issues for both of *Fairytale's* directors, Sophia and Katerina.

Sophia and Katerina sat with their cast and went through each entire scene, providing everyone with their scene division: S/As and T/Ds themselves drew lines through their scripts as they broke down the play and there were moments when students would make comments or they would have opinions about where and whether a scene should be cut or not. McAuley argues that all performance is necessarily structured in some way and that "the connection between segmentation and meaning is of central importance at all stages of the creative process" (McAuley, 1999:127).

McAuley proposes four levels of segmentation, two macro and two micro: the macro units (in her terms levels 1 and 2) are usually based on the playwright's structuring of the dramatic material "so that the actors who are working with text are essentially involved at this stage of the process in exploring, interpreting, and appropriating a dramatic structure" (*ibid*: 161), while the micro units (levels 3 and 4) are concerned with the detailed work between actors and directors in rehearsal. McAuley

observes segmentation from both an audience perspective and from practitioners' practice: how do the S/As understand their work, the meaning of the play and their roles? However, for the purpose of this section I am especially concerned with levels 1 and 2 of McAuley's division insofar as they concern acts and scenes. Level 2 units, McAuley writes, "are constructed essentially along the lines of the neoclassical scene, on the basis of actorial presence" (*ibid*: 161), that is, actors' entrances and exits. The units at this level of segmentation are most commonly referred to as "episodes" or "scenes" (*ibid*, 162).

For teachers and students it became dramaturgically important to segment the script in the way it would be understandable to them. *Fairytale* was re-constructed to meet the needs of the team: male roles were changed into female ones and female students played male roles; scenes were merged; lines were cut; lines were distributed to other characters but whatever they did with the segmentation, the priority was to leave the meaning of the play untouched. The use of females to play male roles was down to a directorial decision from the T/Ds in School A to select their lead actors on the basis of merit, with no regard for correctly filling the requisite quotas of male and female roles, and the resultant shortage of good male leads.¹

The genders of some roles were easily changed, for instance, that of the tavern owner, originally written for a male character; similarly, the judge became female rather than male, as originally intended by the playwright. The roles of the two outlaws, the foreman, and the war messenger were also played by female students, this time dressed in male costumes as it was judged unnecessary to change these roles into female characters. The latter characters kept their names and there was no confusion using the suffix which, in the Greek language, denotes the gender of the person referred to.

¹ See Chapter 2 , 2.2 for the criteria of selecting the plays.

However, both students and teacher became confused when they mentioned the characters whose gender they had changed. For instance the tavern man (taverniaris) had to change into tavern woman (taverniarissa); Mr Judge (dikastis) changed into Mrs Judge (dikastina), and a third person changed from Theodore (Thodoris) into Theodora. This gender alteration affected the segmentation of the play as some lines had to merge into other lines whilst other parts had to be erased completely in order to keep the newly created characters in line with a) the hyphos¹ of the playwright, b) the era in which the play was initially written and c) the number in the ensemble.

The *Suitcase* participants approached the playscript segmentation differently, which would, in turn, have quite different implications for the rehearsals. *The Boy with the Suitcase* was written by Mike Kelly in 2008 and is set in an unknown city at war. It follows the story of a boy in his teens as he tries to find a way out of his country. Through adventures and risky encounters with nature and criminals he manages to reach the ‘promised land’: he makes a journey to self-awareness. Unlike *Fairytale* the writing is extremely naturalistic.

The playscript is divided into seven acts; however the teachers and students used the terms “scenes” irrespective of whether they were referring to acts or to smaller sections of the script. This ‘scene’ division was marked by lights dimming and music playing, devices specified by the directors. ‘There seemed to be no discernible grouping of the scenes into acts, so I will call all segments of the productions ‘scenes’. While the

¹ “Text means texture; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue – this mixture – the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web. Were we fond of neologisms, we might define the theory of the text as a hyphology (hyphos is the tissue and the spider’s web).” (Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), trans. Richard Miller, Oxford basil Blackwell 1990 :64

Fairytale process relied heavily on scene segmentation and divisions, *Suitcase*'s T/Ds did not feel compelled to segment the script in such a drastic way. Petros, T/D for *Suitcase*, left the whole of scene 6 out of his production. The reasons were a) he did not think that he would have the time to work on this section in his preferred way, and b) he thought that the cutting of this particular scene would not affect the meaning he wanted for his production. Petros thought that the rehearsal period was so truncated that students would not have adequate time to concentrate effectively and quickly on this section.

It is quite common to acknowledge the link between the playscript and the *mise en scène*: the dramaturgy of the text informs how scenes are constructed. However, the segmentation of *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* had further implications. In both processes the rhythm of the schedule seemed to reflect the dramaturgy of the texts. *Fairytale* with its eight scenes and 25 characters (with one doubling part) meant that the scheduling was tight and turnover was extremely rapid: a group of three or four S/As might be called in for a one hour rehearsal slot before the scheduled rehearsal time. There were times when another three or four S/As were rehearsing with the second T/D out of the predetermined rehearsal time. In this way, there was often a sense of hovering – almost like a relay team – as S/A waited for their call to begin rehearsal. S/As would sometimes arrive early to rehearse in prearrangement with one of the T/Ds. The re-shaping and re-structuring of the playscripts very directly affected the practitioners' working rhythms: the stream of characters coming and going in both plays was also manifest in the rehearsal hours; the longer one-to-one scenes of both plays saw actors sit and watch one another work.

The rehearsal scheduling and rhythm, that is the sequence and the pace of the rehearsed scenes, affected the generation of meaning in the practitioners' creative

practice. In both *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*, the coming and going of actors and the rapid shifts in the rehearsing of scenes prepared the S/As for the fast scene changes in the performance. The rhythm encountered and repeated over 10 weeks – Saturdays only and, towards the performance date a few extra hours of rehearsal – became embedded in S/As' bodies.

At both schools there was an unusual presence, the way they behaved and acted in the rehearsal room as these S/As inhabited places not used as areas of working practice: for instance, they slumped on the old school chairs in the corner or crouched on the floor. I felt their compulsion to explore every part of the room as a rehearsal space or a creative space, or even as their private space. In both processes, S/As mostly sat on the school chairs and watched the scene under rehearsal. The majority of the S/As were present most of the time thereby creating a constant, makeshift audience or what looked like an audition panel, with those rehearsing in the stage area constantly confronted by a row of bodies sitting in close proximity to the 'stage'. Sometimes there were S/As watching the rehearsal sitting at the side of the room or at its far end and, because the production was to be mounted on a thrust stage, they were still very much present to the actors on 'stage'. S/As rehearsed the particular scenes over and over and T/Ds coordinated the scenes. S/As were watching one another carefully sharing breathing and rhythm.

In both processes, with so many onlookers, it was not surprising that all of the T/Ds discussed 'the audience' from the start. Both productions were to be mounted on an Italian stage¹ and during rehearsals S/As observing from 'offstage' would sit either at the front or at the sides or at the far end of the room. This allowed T/Ds and the S/As 'onstage' to develop an awareness of performer/audience proxemics (and here, spatial

¹ Or the proscenium where the audience face the stage and the actors play facing the audience

as well as temporal considerations come to the fore). At one point, Petros did not like one of the S/As sitting with his back to the stage: “If it was a proscenium arch I’d say fine ... but I need to keep it active” (Petros, from transcription March, 2010). Petros wanted the students, even when they were not in a scene, to be actively involved. S/As were also aware of the thrust-stage setting. So, for instance, when S/As sat to the left of the room, to the left side of the stage, Manos- who played the teacher – had no hesitation in moving downstage left to face upstage, thereby opening himself up to the audience; for Manos, these S/As’ presence signalled the prospective audience.

This makeshift audience in both processes, usually on all sides of the ‘stage’, provided a constant reminder of the performance configuration. This audience also became useful *quasi* ‘spectators’ for all T/Ds, particularly in funny moments or in emotional, cathartic moments such as when one of us responded with smiles and laughter to Adonis’s portrayal of the King, Katerina, T/D for *Fairytale* interrupted the run-through and told Adonis “Don’t ever move on a laugh line” (from transcription April 2010). Similarly, actors were encouraged to keep a particular creative decision if it had elicited a desirable response from the people watching. Both T/Ds and actors began to shape the work according to some of the responses from the onlookers.

4.2.2. The meaning of time in rehearsals.

Having examined the segmentation of the playscripts and the rehearsal scheduling, I now wish to write about the time spent in rehearsals: specifically time spent on acts and scenes. This is not only with respect to the breakdown of hours and minutes, but how time was experienced by the practitioners and for me as an observer. I am, in Turner's terms, beginning to understand (or experience) fieldwork 'on the pulses'

(in Conquergood 1991:187). Here Turner is referring to researchers being sensitive to the ebb and flow of a given community's practices; being aware of the rhythms and the pace. For instance, researching theatre rehearsals as opposed to other fieldwork contexts is unusual due to the extraordinary time constraints: rehearsals took place in limited time frameworks.

As *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* were school theatre productions, the time constraints operating in their processes revolved around accommodating other work commitments: the day job for the teachers, personal life and other individual activities - for the students, out-of-school activities such as private tuition, music lessons, athletics and personal life; hence the decision to rehearse on Saturdays, early afternoon and early evenings. Both processes had definite temporal shapes. On a macro level - 'macro' both in McAuley's sense concerning 'act' and 'scene' segmentation and in the looser sense of the broad production shape - both processes shifted from a place of lengthy reflection (where there was 'all the time in the world' to ponder the work) towards a rapidly paced tempo (triggered by the feeling of 'time running out'): the processes began at a slower rate but by tech-week, week 10, had sped up to fever pitch.

These tempos - the slow build-up versus the perceived acceleration of time towards the end - were manifest in bodies. For Jackson, time and body are inextricably connected not just scientifically but also etymologically:

Even the most abstract words often refer us to the body. Our word 'time' is from the Latin tempus, originally denoting a 'stretch' and cognate with tempora, 'temples of the head' - perhaps because the skin stretches and corrugates here as one grows older.(Jackson, 1989:142-3).

In *Fairytale*, Dimitris and Marios not only played characters in the play but they were also members of the music ensemble which played live music in the performance. The pressured time constraints of this double role revealed itself in particular body

manifestations: Dimitris and Marios usually sat at stage left. During one rehearsal they were rehearsing the 'fighting scene' where Dimitris physically fought with another student onstage and Marios tried to separate them. When the fight came to an end, both of them had to leave the stage as there was a music theme coming and they had to play their instruments. Both grabbed their instruments whilst walking and climbed down the stage with the same gait and the same rhythm of movement and energy displayed in the fight. Here the rapid tempo of the production radically informed bodily practice.

Over 12 weeks, the *Fairytale* process saw approximately 80 hours of rehearsal time: around 4 – 5 hours every Saturday for S/As and 3 hours per week for the music ensemble, this prearranged with the group each week. Over 12 weeks the *Suitcase* process occupied approximately 60 hours of rehearsal time: around 3 hours every Saturday and, nearer the performance date, extra hours of rehearsal during week days and after school. The eventual running time for *Suitcase* was 60 minutes whereas *Fairytale* lasted 100 minutes. *Suitcase* is a significantly shorter play than *Fairytale* so an examination of the ratios between rehearsal hours and script lengths reveals that *Suitcase* practitioners had a comparatively longer time to rehearse than the *Fairytale* practitioners. In that case, how might we account for the somewhat contradictory experience of time? One way to understand this experience is by considering how each process related 'working on scenes' to the broader frame of the production as a whole.

The *Fairytale* process built from a 'part to whole' trajectory where the participants worked with small sections of acts of the script for many weeks without any concrete sense of how or where such sections related to the production in its entirety. There were a few reasons for this: the short rehearsal session meant that only small or limited segments could be rehearsed in any one session; the large size of the cast, along with the rapid entrance and exit patterns for the characters, meant that some of the S/As

could run through their parts in any one session and there were scenes that had not been worked on at all; the constant changes in the script in almost every rehearsal; and lastly the length of the play which would not allow students to follow the sequence of the events within the script. The effect was one of dislocation.

On the other hand the *Suitcase* process moved quite fluidly between working on small sections and then conceptualising the whole performance: there was a smooth shift from part to whole. This was due to the shorter length of the play; from their own experiences, students were familiar with the story told in the script as immigration was a major issue at that time in Greece; the changes in the script were not so drastic as in *Fairytale*; there were a smaller number of the S/As which allowed them to be onstage for a longer period. A second reason why *Fairytale* felt like a longer rehearsal process was the need for repeated runs of scenes due to students not knowing their lines. Rehearsals did not adhere to the schedule and the need to learn lines hampered the rehearsals' flow.

So far, these two sections have explored the practitioners' relationships with spaces, places and temporal constraints. The choice of place, the organisation of time and the restructuring of the script not only affected some of the pre-existing meanings of the play itself but also generated new meanings and enriched the experiences of both teachers and students as they worked to create the productions.

When describing the two rehearsal processes I have used general and perhaps indiscriminatory terms like 'working on' scenes, or 'working through' or 'covering' or 'rehearsing' scenes, and yet what do these terms mean exactly? While the rehearsal practices in *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* involved many overlaps, the details of the work were to some degree unique to each process. The notion of 'rehearsing scenes' was not only

specific to each play but also specific to where such rehearsals occurred within the time frame of each process: ‘working on’ a scene on day one of rehearsals constituted a very different set of practices from those seen when visiting the scene in the days before the opening night. It is to these rehearsal practices in all their diversity that I turn now.

5.2.2.1. Being “At The Table” and “On the Floor”

a. Table-Work: Script Analysis, Micro/Macro Segmentation and Towards an Embodiment of Character

For both *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* participants, table-work involved script analysis with an emphasis on discussing themes of the play and characters’ psychologies, their histories and their relationships with other characters. This work also included further segmenting of the playscript into smaller, rehearsable sections. Importantly, during both processes, the T/Ds tried to guide the S/As towards not being disembodied or disengaged from their characters’ physicality while sitting down for discussion. During *Suitcase* rehearsals, T/Ds would call students to sit at the table before reading through the relevant section. It was important that each S/A understood what was motivating their characters at any given moment: what was their objective in the scene? During a rehearsal for *Suitcase*, Petros and S/As sat around the table and discussed one word:

Petros: There is the word “terrific” for the sea. What do you think of this word?

Student: Don’t you like it?

Petros: I think there is something wrong with the translation. I don’t think he means “terrific”.

There is an argument. The students defend the word terrific as it is an idiom they use in everyday life and is specific to young people of their age, just like the characters in the play.

Petros: I would use another word, like wonderful, beautiful, extraordinary fantastic, imaginary.

Throughout these discussions, S/As would try to find a different meaning of a given word by the author in order to build a clearer profile of the meaning of the play.

Petros would lead the S/As to the meaning he wanted to deliver. At *Fairytale* rehearsals, the participants gathered on the stage and began reading the play while they were on the stage in a stop/start fashion, pausing to discuss characters and relationships. As we saw in the previous chapter, Katerina gave instructions in detail on how she wanted the characters portrayed and the nature of the relationship between them.

The practitioners used the time both at the table and on stage to further segment the playscript into pieces smaller than scenes in order to build on the dramatic atmosphere. But, while *Suitcase* participants were implicit in their structuring, *Fairytale* practitioners very explicitly divided the script: they merged some scenes; the script was broken down into small sections; they merged lines; they cut down lines; lines would be given to another character. While the division of the script into scenes was dictated by Sophia and Katerina, further segmentation into smaller pieces of action was suggested and negotiated between the S/As. McAuley describes this level 3 segmentation as ‘micro-structuring’, which is substantially the work of directors and actors in rehearsal:

Many terms exist to name the units that are being constructed and manipulated (beat, idea, unit of action, action, sense, block) and this in itself indicates that the processes involved are reasonably well understood, even codified, although they may not have yet been theorized with any precision (McAuley 1999: 163).

Interestingly, during the *Suitcase* process, these smaller units of action were named and explicitly recognised by both students and teachers: “Drowning Scene”, “Separation Scene”¹, for example. At *Fairytale*, both T/Ds and S/As seemed to skirt around ever drawing scene divisions. This was possibly because so many of the scenes were altered and modified in order to be tailored to the needs of the performance: number of students; scenic economy: to re-create a scene in order to comply with the

¹ Later in the next chapter I will describe how the T/Ds approached and directed the aforementioned scenes.

meaning the teachers attributed to the play and their resultant instructions and perspectives on the play.

So while students went through the scripts, T/Ds assisted them in finding a consensus as to the dramaturgical shape of these smaller units within each scene. For instance in the 'Drawing Scene' in *Suitcase*, Petros suggested that there were different stages for the drama in order to reach the peak of its intensity. He wanted the scene to 'drive all the way' to that point so that the action would build and the audience would be finally confronted with the fact that these two young children on that boat are all alone in the world. In this way, the partial segmentation of every scene was strongly informed by the psychology of each exchange between the characters. In both processes T/Ds urged students to use the pause as a technique, to 'take a moment' to change the direction of ascent, or a change of action or a change in the mood of a character. These approaches were overtly based on psychology.

Pause is not a mere mechanical halt of the voice, determined by the end of the line in poetry, by punctuation, or the mechanism of grammar or rhetoric; that its purpose is anything more than a much-needed opportunity to breathe, is not always clear to the young reader. The idea of pause as a necessary part of the thought, as an accentuation of the thought, as a silence filled with significance, as a time to reflect upon what is past and to prepare for what is to come, must be a gradual realization; (Thorn –Wright, 1912:560)

Of course pauses themselves are not divorced from the psychological shape of a scene. All T/Ds felt that a pause (denoted by the playwright or suggested by the director) denotes a change of direction in a scene and:

It is the business of the teacher to distinguish and develop what is primary and essential so that improvement may be real and permanent rather than apparent and fleeting. (*ibid*)

This 'on table' time was very reminiscent of high schools, as practitioners worked to make (or, in their terms, 'reveal') meanings in the text. Even students themselves understood the guided process. During the 'finding the meaning' process Maria, a student, exclaimed: "It is like the literature lesson" (From transcription, Maria, April 2010). However, unlike a literature tradition - one which invokes a mind/body split, privileging the mind (active) over the body (passive) - these T/Ds had to guide their practitioners to perform what they had come to understand as their characters. Even during these early stages of reading the script, the beginnings of 'character' were quite obvious in both processes; T/Ds would urge their S/As to start performing their roles even from the 'table'. As a result, very visible, recognisable character traits were apparent even while everyone was seated, and this was clear from the very start of rehearsals. Character voices and eye contact were used by the actors during the readings. Even start/stop processes were there before the team moved to 'on the floor'.

b. Arranging the tables

If the practitioners were physically engaged in character during table work, exactly where and how were they sitting? The arrangement of the table/floor relationship, the nature of the table (can it accommodate everyone?) is indicative of, and affected, the nature of the work done in rehearsals. *Fairytale* used school desks and school chairs and *Suitcase* used a mixed shape table – rectangular with one curved side – which marked out stage areas. How these places were activated and inscribed by each group of practitioners differed enormously. In the *Fairytale* rehearsal room, which was the function room on the top floor of the school building, school desks and school chairs represented the auditorium and theatre seats. This is where the practitioners would sit to

discuss, analyse and modify the script. During the rehearsal sessions, students would be sitting in the 'auditorium' waiting for their scene to be rehearsed.

In the *Suitcase* rehearsal room the table dominated the room. It was a big table, positioned exactly in the middle of the room. The table could usually accommodate all the S/As and the director. The table was the 'meeting point' for the participants when they entered the rehearsal room; it was the 'triggering area' in which they tried to discover the meanings of the text through analysis. To begin with however, in both processes, T/Ds would drag a chair over to the stage area and sit down. After a while, in the heat of the rehearsal, all T/Ds would rise from their seats and walk up and down the 'stage': they were literally an embodiment of the page to stage trajectory, and they would interrupt the scene being rehearsed in order to shape it.

In the *Suitcase* rehearsal room the large, two-shaped table where anyone could gather comfortably to take notes, created a permanent space for seated reflection and discussion. Each rehearsal would start with table-discussion; table-work would involve careful script and character analysis, work that must occur prior to being 'on the floor'. Petros would work each scene as much as possible before S/As attempted to work in the stage space. On the other hand, *Fairytale* practitioners would work on the stage floor because school chairs were not a comfortable place to sit or work. The working area before the 'on the floor' area was the space between the auditorium and the elevated stage. Participants would stand in the auditorium and put their scripts on the stage floor that served them as a 'table' as it was at such a height above the level of the auditorium. All the participants found themselves in the 'in between' stage, '*in transito*' as my drama teacher used to call it, meaning the place between the real and the fictional worlds.

The different weighting of table and floor work in the two schools must not be considered as a radical discrepancy with regards to script discussion. As we shall see,

just because *Fairytale* practitioners spent comparatively more time on the floor it by no means meant that they talked less about the character meanings.

c. Floor work: Blocking and Rehearsal Modes

After discussion of the scene at the tables, T/Ds usually said «πάμε να το στήσουμε» which literally means “Let’s go and set it up”. They were referring to blocking the action. The term ‘blocking’ is a familiar part of theatre rehearsals, and both Potts (1995) and McAuley (1999) have described this mode of rehearsal. Potts writes:

This is the first time the three dimensional space becomes activated by the actors; the play is tackled scene by scene with a view to ‘moving’ it or taking it ‘onto the floor’. From the chairs in which they [the practitioners] have been sitting, they move to the ‘make up’ which in floor-tape sets the boundaries of the stage-space and those features of the set that will affect the actors’ movements and the spatialisation of the play (1995:94).

McAuley describes blocking as being “concerned essentially with the construction of moves and groupings and with the placing of the action” (1999:105); it is “the construction of the physical manifestation [of the segmentation of the action or narrative]” (*ibid*: 164).

In *Fairytale* rehearsals, the stage area was clearly delineated by the stage itself: as stated in Chapter 2, the stage was elevated and obviously separate from the auditorium. The T/Ds had the whole space to work with. At the beginning of the rehearsals, just a few objects (props) were on stage. For the first scene, for example, a chair to denote the throne was enough to be the benchmark for the whole first scene. T/Ds would position the S/As in relation to where the chair had been placed - for instance the king on one chair and the queen on another with the others arranged diagonally. From the beginning, the space in the *Suitcase* rehearsals had been divided as follows: a big round column situated at stage left defined the stage whereas on the

opposite side was the wall. The big round column separated the ‘stage’ from the table-space and demarcated these two different worlds – that of the playscript and that of action. It was the transition space.

School desks were used to represent the physical performance environment: a bed, a bench, mountains, a ship and sewing machines. After the first reading/meaning-making on the table, Petros called the students ‘on the floor’ to create an animated reading; that is students moved about the set, with scripts in hands, observing the stage directions. In that way, teachers could see how the students’ bodies reacted in relation to the text and to the space and students could claim and inscribe the space immediately. They used the school space with a different discourse now: the space normally used for school purposes was transformed into a theatrical space. So *Suitcase* actors were moving in the space after they had experienced table discussion, unlike *Fairytale*’s practitioners who worked ‘on the floor’ for reading through, character discussion, meaning clarification, text modification and of course blocking the scenes. McAuley notes that blocking is “fundamental to the creation of theatrical meaning” (1999:105) and this is not only the case for the spectators who will finally watch a performance but also for the practitioners in rehearsal: the act of blocking is essential in determining and embodying deeper meanings.

Once initial discussion had taken place either at the table (*Suitcase*) or on the stage (*Fairytale*), the practitioners spent the remaining rehearsal on the floor developing the performance, concentrating on the minutiae of delivery right through to the broader shape of the production. In both processes, floor-work involved three identifiable modes of practice: discussion on set; stop/start work and running scenes. Each of these modes had very different qualities about them, most notably different tempos. There

was always a distinct sense of building from a slower reflection on set through to the more fluid, pumping, full running of scenes¹. These three modes are best understood as a continuum rather than exclusive categories, as T/Ds often overlapped these categories.

1) Prolonged Discussion On Set

Practitioners would sometimes sit down on the set to discuss the shape of a scene. This occurred mostly after a run of the scene; that is, the T/Ds and S/As had worked through a scene on the set and, once they reached the end, the performers would usually sit down on or off the stage area, on chairs, on desks, around the table or lying on the floor. Here they would all reflect on the scene, and T/Ds would ask questions to draw out further clarification from the actors as to what the scene was ‘about’. It was always interesting to see the space being used in this way. At these times the practitioners were very much separate from the fiction they were developing.

This mode – discussion on set – was especially central for *Fairytale*’s practitioners as they had spent less time at the ‘table’. Just as ‘table work’ should not imply that the S/As were somehow disembodied, so too did floor–work not always involve movement. In both processes there were many start/stop moments where practitioners discussed things.

2) Stop/Start Work

The mode of stopping and starting was perhaps the most common during rehearsals. Suzan Cole writes about this aspect of rehearsal:

The *work* of rehearsal work - what, in fact, often makes actors irritable and frustrated - is the forced enactment of the flow and the stoppages that are inherent in all creative activity. My own analysis

¹ I will write about the rhythm of the rehearsal in a later section.

of rehearsal temporarily "stops" a process whose stoppages can only be understood as part of a continuum (Cole, 1999:9).

Directors and actors run tiny fragments of action, constantly interrupting in order to shape particular moments. In the rehearsals I observed, this process could range from an almost agonisingly slow analysis of a few lines - see (page 185) for the word 'terrific' stopping and starting the run of fragments – right through to what Petros described as 'fine-tuning' sessions and Sophia as 'combing the performance'. Nearer the day of the performance these interjections were tiny suggestions (for instance 'colour your line'¹), almost not interrupting the work at all, as students were running scenes more fluidly and T/Ds – especially Petros – would zig zag amongst them on the stage. Often directors would ask the students to 'run' a scene and I would assume that the work might be presented uninterrupted. However, usually the directors or even actors themselves would start the scene part-way through and. In the process shape it, ask a question, self-correct or even say the lines of their co-player or to admonish co-students who were not concentrating.

3) Running Scenes

I have described the third mode as 'running scenes'², a metaphor articulated by the practitioners themselves: I would hear, "Let's run that scene" or "Let's run that section again". This trope, *running*, aptly describes this aspect of the work, as all the practitioners would perform an entire section without stopping and the feeling in the room was always one of rapid movement, especially after the more laborious stop/start process, Although T/Ds were often on the stage they were trying to act as invisible guides and monitors, trying not to interrupt the process. However, the uninterrupted

¹ This is a Greek expression when someone needs to put meaning in their reading.

² The expression 'running a scene' is the analogical translation from the Greek expression 'doing a scene'.

‘running’ of scenes (and the acts) was quite rare and really only apparent in the last week of production. Both Potts (1995) and Hertzberg (1998) in writing about rehearsal, discuss ‘running’ as part of the final stages of the process.

It is only when all the segments of meaning which have been acquired through rehearsal, discussion and actors’ and director’s personal reflection and insight are combined in a ‘run’ that the power and structure of a script is released and appreciated in ways which allows greater clarity on everyone’s behalf about the little ‘tweaks’ which need to be made to increase its ‘meaning’. There are parallels in other art forms I think, especially in, say, harmonic choral singing where, for example, the song’s parts must be taught to different sections of the choir and orchestra and rehearsed in stop/start manner gradually to improve sections and the sub-group’s contributions – ten minutes spent improving the tenors’ understanding of their part; working with the brass instrumentalists to get their volume and pace better adjusted etc – that a modified ‘stop/start’ approach is adopted where longer sections are attempted with less-frequent interjections by the musical director and, more often, comments at the end of a section ‘run’.

All this works towards a full run of the musical work with comments at the end. There are parallels in dance and visual art too; it’s about revealing the meaning of a script in parallel with finding ways to express and capture that meaning within the dramatic medium. Those aims are pursued in symbiosis.

There is also the issue of unravelling the meaning of a ‘key section/moment/statement’ in a text. The meaning which is discussed and clarified concerning such sections has relevance beyond that moment in the performance, as it informs key aspects of the characters’ motivations, relationships etc which establishes

their characters' qualities, feelings, motivations and responses in many other aspects of the script/play.

It is also during this mode that T/Ds would experiment with different movements and shapes, which in turn offered openings for various performance choices. I use the term 'choices' in the sense that this suggests individual agency but sometimes something bigger seemed at work, as if the scene itself demanded particular performances from the actors.

The script usually only shows the words spoken by the characters. Finding and performing the character who speaks those words, with all the implications of their motivations, sincerity etc is what the heart of rehearsal should be. The practical issues – how to stage it etc is secondary – important, but useless unless the actors discover the meaning of their words and the motivations of their characters.

For instance, the first run of *Fairytale* rehearsals involved the entire cast moving around on the stage and this impacted on the actors' performances: Sophia had asked the students to walk around the stage as their character, finding a specific physical characteristic that they thought their character would have or develop throughout the play. Students started to experiment with various walking patterns: proud, limping, strolling, scheming, fast, drunk, determined and wondering were some of the 'walkings' I could decipher. The opening scene imposed on the students 'a choice' that they should follow throughout the play. S/As physical appearance – their corporeality – showed aspects of their character. This is often not purely physical; a way of walking may be triggered by a psychological state (suspicion, shame, joy etc) or a physical characteristic may give rise to a psychological state, for example a limp may make an individual feel inferior or aggressive. For the actors, the floor-work involved a profound degree of

physicality and as the following section suggests a very intimate relationship with the segmentation of the playscript.

d. Embodied Segmentation

While table work involved further segmentation of the playscript, the work on the floor saw an embodied segmentation. Once they were in the space moving around, first the actors then the directors began articulating divisions that may or may not have been apparent when sitting down.

During one of the first rehearsals for the opening scene of *Suitcase*, Petros worked hard to 'drive' the action through to the end of the 'first change of mood'. The first scene of *Suitcase* opens with the father trying to wake up his son because they need to evacuate the house. The father tries to remain cool and not show the real reason for the evacuation which was a foreign army bombarding the village; he did not want to reveal that he was afraid. The dialogue comprising this first part of the scene was delivered extremely quickly. This was aided by the lines themselves, which were short, sometimes indicating that one actor needed to cut off another actor mid-stream. For instance, below is a small exchange of what was being said:

Father: Wake up
Naz: What is it father?
Father: Nothing. You need to get up.
Naz: What for?
Father: Because
Naz: Where is mother?
Father: to the sheep.

The dialogue itself complemented, or perhaps even informed, the practitioners' choice for a fast delivery. For most of the first moments of the dialogue, Father stood awkwardly on stage looking around the space, suggesting his wish to protect his son from what was going on outside the house. As the sound of the bombardment came in

from 'outside', Father was almost standing on tiptoe, ready to fly in any direction. And then, one page into the play, when Naz asked if the sound was fireworks, Father shot off from his precarious position in the middle of the stage almost like a stone from a catapult which had been stretched too far for too long, hurtling towards the imaginary cupboards to collect some things.

This 'collection' provided the first silence of the scene, and the actors - especially Father - took a moment to breathe and to change the direction of the scene. Father turned away from his son, bowed his head pretending he was collecting cutlery and pans and said, "It is bombs", the first line of the next unit of the play. Here was an instance where the explicit segmentation at the table was activated physically by the actors; they embodied this division through the rhythm and in this case the speed of the dialogue, through movement, and then through the distribution of the body weight. It was not until the line "It is bombs" was delivered at the end of the first part that father settled into a standing position, thus emphasising the dramatic moment.

On the floor, segmentation other than "units" - a segmentation even more refined where explanations may be given- was also developed, again both implicitly and explicitly. In the above example the S/A who portrayed the father worked under Petros' direction to alter his energy for the start of the second 'unit'. Petros told him to pause before saying the line "It is bombs", so the student delivered it with his face slightly hidden from his son and rushing, almost mumbling his words. He also turned his body and face away from his son, looking down to the imaginary cutlery. McAuley describes this as "fourth level" segmentation. There are no terms in common for these units, for "at this level of the performance [or rehearsal] the actors work in detail with minute fragments of bodily behaviour, emotion, thought, impulse, energy, speech" (1999:164).

Petros would use phrases such as, "Tweak that word" or "choose to pause"¹, "You need a pause" or "Sharpen that line". Similarly Sophia and Katerina from *Fairytale* would describe these as 'moments' and often they would be heard saying, "That moment needs to be more dramatic" or "Spit the line to him". Interestingly, in both processes, the actors understood what the directors were referring to and could manipulate their performance accordingly.

e. Discourses on Doings

The *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* rehearsals constituted a variety of performance practices in creating the productions. How might I understand this work? How did the practitioners understand these different tasks? Is it possible to conceive of them under a single collection of practices, some of which could be described as 'Stanislavskian' or 'Stanislavskian-derived'. I begin with Stanislavski because my understanding of the work in the two rehearsal processes was heavily influenced by what I thought acting *was*²: a rigorous process of finding characters' psychologies; subtexts; their motivations and objectives; their emotional topographies, all acquired through the careful division of the script into tiny fragments before running these sections together.

Petros from the *Suitcase* production divided the script into 'units of meaning' and the father's subsequent embodiment of that first 'unit' are recognisably Stanislavskian. Stanislavski's definition of acting as creating the "the inner life of human spirit" (1937:14) – a plausible, psychologised person – informed both rehearsal processes. Similarly, his careful work concerning script segmentation, beginning with his famous analogy between a playscript and a turkey where segmenting, breaking

¹ Depending on S/As, where did they think their character would pause.

² Lewis (1992) in his book *Ring of Liberation: Deceptive Discourse in Brazilian Capoeira* frames his observation to understand the Brazilian Capoeira in what he thought it was.

down, a script without dividing it into scenes and then smaller units is like trying to eat an entire turkey without carving it (*ibid*: 111-112), was explicit throughout *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*. Petros' direction of the scene with the father might be understood as employing Stanislavski's concept of "living the part inwardly" and then guiding the actors to "an external embodiment" (*ibid*: 14).

A large body of work has been written on the area of acting practice under the umbrella of 'Stanislavski' and, to a lesser extent, his disciples, for example, Strasberg and Mamet. That is, authors write about and theorise acting within one or more of these categories or within the categories of other great twentieth-century theorists of acting. In fact, it is not unusual to find books with chapter headings 'Stanislavski', 'Grotowski' and 'Brecht'. Examples include Mitter's book, *Systems of Rehearsal* (1992), in which he studied to what extent echoes of these theorists can be found in Peter Brook's rehearsal work; Colin Counsell's *Signs of Performance* (1996); Auslander's *From Acting to Performance* (1997) which covers modern theories of acting; and Meyer-Dinkgräfe's *Approaches to Acting* (2001).

The publishers of the 1988 edition of *An Actor Prepares* make the substantial claim that Stanislavski had a greater impact on acting than anyone else. "His 'system' - or interpretations of it - has become the central force determining almost every performance we see on stage" (reprint 1988, back cover text, first published 1937). So, over the last twenty-five years, much writing has dealt with Stanislavski's books, and, recently, theorists such as Auslander (1995) and Copeland (1990) have enlisted deconstructionist thinking in order to critique his model of acting. Important as this work may be, these theorists are interrogating a set of writings rather than a set of doings. In their writing there is a distinct absence of real actors and directors involved in real practices, resulting in a single, neat overarching theory of acting. Even Mitter, who

claims to study rehearsal – surely a paradigm of practice *par excellence* – did not attend the sessions, but rather drew on interviews with Brook, Brook’s writings and newspaper reviews of the productions (Mitter, 1992). As a parallel to theatre work, no matter if it is for professional or educational purposes¹, I would like to take into account the pioneer of Educational Drama, Dorothy Heathcote, who based her work on Stanislavski’s ‘magic if’ by suggesting to her students that they put themselves in other people’s shoes.

However, in my efforts to describe and conceptualise the rehearsals I studied, labelling either rehearsal process as categorically ‘Stanislavskian’ became immediately problematic although there are similarities as has been stated in Chapter 2. Firstly, I encountered school practices and not those of the professional theatre; the school theatre was undertaken with professional standards of seriousness, determination and dedication but the practitioners involved were amateurs without experience of the professional theatre field. Secondly, although it could be labelled as school theatre, during rehearsal practitioners engaged with work that fell outside this label and conformed with professional work approaches and the act of such labelling would efface this form of work. The processes revealed themselves: the practices I documented were πράξεις (praxis), which in Greek means *doings*. As Zarrilli argues, “practices are not things, but an active embodied doing” (Zarrilli, 1998:5).

My fieldwork research led me to rethink taken-for-granted genre categories such as ‘Stanislavskian’. Once practitioners’ πράξεις (praxeis, *doings*) became the focus of the project, conceptualising practices in terms of distinct genres was potentially left behind. Here Briggs and Bauman’s work (1992) on genre terms is especially salient. Lewis summarises their argument:

¹ “It is theatre” as has been stated previously.

If a speaker or writer wishes to create the sense of an ordered universe of clearly bounded generic terms, the strategy is to minimize these gaps, linking groups of utterances or texts clearly together into a genre set. The opposite strategy is to maximize such gaps, creating a world of genre ambiguity or heterogeneity in which a given discourse token doesn't quite fit a genre category or fits several at once. (Lewis, 1995:223)

My project had led me to maximise the gaps and blur genre boundaries: the rehearsals did not manifest a distinct, contained, completed approach to acting or directing, rather the practices were unstable and often incomplete. There were moments when T/Ds balanced themselves between a classroom and a rehearsal room. Maxwell makes the important point that, while:

... Stanislavski claimed to be creating a rational system of acting [his research] did not ... proceed proportionally but as practice. The theoretical grounds of his work were neither rigorous nor explicit, but articulated as quasi-scientifically informed common sense. His books (written as afterthoughts to subsidize his later work) have recourse to homey, anecdotal examples to support his assertions (Maxwell, 2001:103).

Sets of practices outlined by Stanislavski – practices themselves written as afterthoughts - were taken up in the contemporary rehearsals I studied in very particular ways. For instance, neither *Fairytale* nor *Suitcase* T/Ds divided the entire script into 'units of meanings' – they had literally only just got half way through the rehearsal period allotted to working 'at the table' before time ran out in the rehearsal session. There was an assumption by participants – including myself- that the remaining divisions might take place on the floor, which is in fact what happened.

While T/Ds spent time guiding students to 'discover' their characters, the labour was not one of a careful, systematic building, but instead was manifested as dynamic discussions full of half-asked questions and incomplete thoughts. Moreover, in the rehearsals there were practices that fell outside any sense of Stanislavskian thinking.

The diverse practices in *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* included: creating histories and psychologies for characters and their relationships (for instance taking lines from the script and creating back stories for the character¹); dividing the script based on these interactions; allowing the psychologies to inform embodiments (for instance Sophia's comments "make me see the adult"); shaping costume, stage design, props, lights and music – live and recorded – to inform embodiment. In one example, as Petros was guiding the S/A who played the father, various practices were at work. Through discussions, Petros explained Father's internal state as 'nervous'; He contextualised this within what had been decided as the father's overall psychology – protective, decisive, determined, afraid, nervous. In order to help the student embody the unit division, he gave him examples where he 'feels' nervous, and left the student to discover for himself the embodiment of this 'nervousness' in bodily movements and vocal delivery. However, such labour was aligned with Petros' instructions. When he said, "Tweak your line", the S/A immediately tried to manipulate his physicality accordingly.

In an effort to understand the nature of the rehearsal work, I have had to move away from reducing it to labels or genres and instead understand it in its own 'here and now'. As Bourdieu argues: "We need to cease thinking in the logic of first beginnings" (1980:264) where we are looking for a creator of practice – in my case, a particular acting theory – and instead turn our attention to practices as they occur in the lived immediacy² the 'here and now' of the practitioners. A productive approach is to interpret the practitioners' own interpretations of what they were doing; that is, to understand their work on their own terms. When the practitioners were discussing the playscript, or doing stop/start work, or running scenes, they did not invoke

¹ For a more detailed account on the building of the characters see previous chapter.

² Michael Jackson draws on Ricœur to describe phenomenology: "an attempt to describe human consciousness in its lived immediacy" (1996:2).

‘Stanislavski’ or any other theorist from the professional or educational theatre field. Rather, they framed these practices as part of a process of discovery (unveiling meanings in the playscript and discovering characters) and as part of the theatre pragmatics of making meanings for an audience, as clearly stated by Petros in his interview: “It was clear from the beginning that whatever we were doing had a just and only purpose: the performance for an audience” (from Petros’ interview, June 2010).

When S/As responded to T/Ds’ direction to ‘spit it out’ or ‘send it to him/her’, this was not understood as ‘discovering the meaning in the playscript’ but instead constructing or making meaning and learning theatre pragmatics. Zarrilli, argues that a:

... practice is not a discourse, but implicit in any practice there are one or more discourses and perhaps paradigms through which the experience of practice might be reflected upon and possibly explained (Zarrilli, 1998:5).

Perhaps they would not identify this kind of statement as motivated by ‘discovering the meaning in the playscript’, but this was almost certainly what they were doing. The T/Ds would discover some meanings in the text only through experiencing it being delivered by a S/A. They may not be able to rationalise their discovery but ‘spit it out’ may reflect the S/As need to capture the T/Ds newly discovered meaning through delivering the line in that way.

In the *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* processes, the experience of practice was understood as either a process of discovery – meaning in the lines, subtext, character, body position - or one of making meaning of the pragmatics of theatre – scenery, scenography, lights - and there were times when the practices seemed to be partly one and partly the other: that is, there was a continual negotiation from one discourse to another. I now turn to these practices and the discourses in which they were framed.

5.2.2.2. Fidelity to the playwright

a. Following the Playwright's Dialogue

Throughout rehearsals, the practitioners were careful to deliver with the utmost fidelity the playwrights' meanings as they understood them and as emerged throughout the text. As I stated previously, both *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* T/Ds made major changes to the script; that is *Fairytale* T/Ds merged, cut, distributed, and erased lines whilst *Suitcase* T/Ds decided to exclude a whole act of the play due to time restrictions, albeit the meaning of the play remained unaltered.

The T/Ds meticulously observed any given stage directions (for instance, movement or gesture) indicated within the dialogue: the two ensembles framed this as remaining loyal to the playwright's work, in terms of playwright's instructions at least. In McAuley's work concerning spatial indicators in playtexts, she begins by dividing a playscript into dialogue and stage directions. She quotes Ingarden's distinction between primary text and secondary text (McAuley 1999:221) and cites Aston and Savona's use of 'intra-dialogic' direction and 'extra-dialogic' direction (*ibid*) to refer to physical representations suggested within the dialogue and outside the dialogue.

However, she argues with the above division stating that "observation of rehearsal process suggests that the most practical categorization of this information concerns the degree of precision (or constraint) involved" (McAuley, 1999:223-4); that is, McAuley is preoccupied with how practitioners engage with the texts, what aspects of the playscripts they find most compelling and what aspects (or directions) they ignore. She describes intra-dialogic information both at an explicit level where a given action is clearly indicated - where the words would be nonsense if unaccompanied by the physical manifestation - and a second order or category which "exists within the

dialogue when a move or action is implied but not specified or made explicit” (McAuley, 1999:25).

In both the *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* rehearsal processes, T/Ds followed the playwrights’ stage directions in various parts of the play. More specifically in the *Fairytale* dialogue, although many parts had to be reformed and adapted to the needs of the cast¹ as had been mentioned in the previous chapter, T/Ds followed the given scenic instructions provided by the playwrights. Below are two examples, one from *Suitcase* and one from *Fairytale* respectively regarding the fidelity to the playtext.

S/As, especially in the beginning of the rehearsal period, would come to the rehearsals without knowing their lines. For this reason there were instances in which they would use words other than those used by the playwright. However, in both processes the T/Ds made it clear that they should remain ‘loyal’ to the playtexts. Ironically enough, there was an instance where Petros from *Suitcase* started a discussion about the word “terrific”. Below is the dialogue between the students and Petros:

Petros: There is the word “terrific” for the sea. What do you think of this word?

Student: Don’t you like it?

Petros: I think there is something wrong with the translation. I don’t think he means “terrific”.

There is an argument. The students defend the word as it is an “idiom” they use in everyday life and specifically children of their age which mirrors the ages of the characters in the play.

Petros: I would use another word, like wonderful, beautiful, extraordinary, fantastic, imaginary

The irony is that he uses metaphoric words like the word used by the translator!!!!

(From my rehearsal notes, December, 2009)

Here Petros wants to change a word in the text, but the students insist on textual loyalty. Students support their argument by defending their characters, thus displaying the empathy needed for the building of the character. The students wanted to remain truthful to the text in order to retain its current status and contemporary *hyphos*.

¹ In order to meet the needs of the team.

At *Fairytale* rehearsals, T/Ds were very strict with the application of the written text, wanting it to be delivered as it was written. They dedicated a lot of the rehearsal time to learning lines. There were constant comments and admonitions every time students came to the rehearsal without knowing their lines accurately, as shown in the text. It was important for both of the teachers that the playtexts be delivered as written by the playwrights. Although they had made major changes in the text by merging, distributing and cutting lines, they remained faithful to the playwright's instructions and their perceived meaning of the play.

They did, however, consent to the following: the play referred to the financial and moral corruption of a kingdom. During the period that the play was in rehearsal, the financial situation in Greece was at its worst; arguments about Greece getting entangled in the IMF 'net' were at their peak. At some point in the play the King asked for financial help from a neighbouring kingdom that wanted "earth and water¹" in exchange. The student playing the King added a line commenting on the current Greek political/financial situation: "Now he is going to ask me for everything in exchange, *as the IMF would ask from Greeks*", something which all the students agreed had to be retained.

After its amendments and adjustments for the specific productions, the script was treated as a fixed, whole and complete entity that held all the answers if only a director and actors knew where and how to examine it and, more specifically, how to interpret the playwrights' instructions. To suggest that the playscript was somehow incomplete, or that it may not provide what was needed for these particular productions, would be a transgression of the playwright's work. I noticed that all four T/Ds wanted to keep the playwrights' intention crystal clear..

¹ "earth and water" is a Greek expression meaning everything vital a person owns.

b. The Playwright's Stage Directions

As with the dialogue, the T/Ds observed all stage directions meticulously¹ and, again, this was couched in terms of the playwrights' ownership of the work. Building on Aston and Savona's term *extra-dialogic* to refer to stage directions, McAuley suggests two levels of explicitness in terms of the way that practitioners engage with this mode of the playtext. The primary level involves characters' entrances and exits, and McAuley argues that these directions are compelling for practitioners and serve to regulate the coming and going of characters and their configuration onstage. The secondary level involves directions for movement within the space and 'business' such as 's/he sits with coffee'. She argues that these directions are frequently ignored by practitioners, "doubtless because [they seem] to relate so strongly to a particular *mise en scène*" (McAuley, 1999:224).

In both *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*, however, T/Ds felt personally *compelled* to observe all the directions, both primary and secondary. The practitioners physically manifested all entrance and exit patterns in Kampanellis' and Kane's texts. This was most notable when the students first entered the stage space: they would wait in the wings (*Fairytale*) or outside the marked rehearsal space (*Suitcase*) with scripts in hands until the direction 'S/he enters'. Similarly they would exit with the stage direction. Not once throughout either process did the practitioners depart from this practice, although it was never explicitly articulated. The directors and actors took up their positions once the layout of the set was clarified, a layout that was decided from the first rehearsal and would be repeated in every newly rehearsed scene. The practitioners in both processes not only observed the entrances and exits but also the blocking and gesture within the

¹ Even the playtext amendments would be with respect to the playwright's intention in order not to change the meaning of the amended section or part.

stage area. For instance, below is a short exchange from the Court Scene from *Fairytale*:

Judge: So tell me, who's responsible for the incident?

Daughter: I do not know.

Judge: You have to speak if you know anything about it.

Daughter: I told you, I do not know. He is innocent.

Daughter: Your father is going to be hanged.

Prince enters the scene and says:

Prince: He is innocent ... I will tell you the truth.¹

During the Court Scene there were at least 12 people on stage – the judge, the defendant, his sister, his daughter, the prince and the jury which consisted of six students. All began to block the action. Sophia started directing and blocking the scene with all the S/As on stage. Because there were so many people onstage, with a number of separate conversations occurring between characters, Sophia, directed the scene in such a way that each exchange was sharp and clear. When the two students performed the small section quoted above, the tone of their delivery sounded straight and a little flat, and Sophia felt the relationship between the two characters was too ambiguous. As a means to give the exchange some dramatic shape, she said to the student portraying the daughter “Look your dad in his eyes. He is your father, he is looking for empathy ... he is giving it to you ... take it and do something”. Here Sophia pointed to the secondary stage directions, reminding the actor to use what the playwright had given her: ‘*She is looking at her dad*’. From then on the student portraying the daughter would look at her dad and that action would give her the time to say her line convincingly: “I do not know. He is innocent”.

¹ Translated by the researcher.

Court scene from the rehearsals.



Similarly, during *Suitcase* Petros was almost mechanical in observing the playwright's directions. Below is a small section from the play at the point where Naz and Chrissia (the main characters) met the procurer:

Chrissia: there is someone at the corner watching us

He looks over Chrissia's shoulder

Naz: *Where?*

Chrissia: (Whispering) Don't look. He is coming closer

Chrissia and Naz stay close to each other

Man: Hi kids

Naz and Chrissia: Hello sir

Man: Have you lost your way?

Chrissia: No, no we are OK

Man: I can show you the way

Man stretches his hand and strokes Chrissia's face

Chrissia turns her face away to avoid his hand and Naz gets between them. With a shaking voice

Naz: Thank you sir, we can find our way.

Suddenly, Naz trips him over and the man falls to the ground. Naz screams at Chrissia

Naz: Run, Chrissia, run!

“Run Chrissia, Run...”



As the students ran this section, the relationship between the three of them was quite fluid: Naz and Chrissia showed their fear differently each time they ran those lines and Man's action was an analogous reaction to how they represented their fear: the more fear they betrayed it the more powerful he felt. During one rehearsal Petros said to the students, 'Clock these' and 'lock these' meaning that they should build a rhythm where Naz and Chrissia's lines are mingled with Man's action: walking, approaching and touching. So, while the students interpreted the stage directions loosely, Petros urged them to 'clock' and 'lock' them, to register them with mechanical precision thereby reiterating follow the playwright's direction. However, the successful mapping of a playwright's stage direction onto a production was not always so clear. During another *Suitcase* rehearsal, a student spoke with Petros about a small section in the last scene of the final act where Naz and Chrissia meet again following Naz's belief that Chrissia died in the Drowning Scene:

Student: I didn't go to the window. I have been, but I didn't this time.
Petros: I think you should.
Student: It's not scripted
Petros: Really?

Apparent in this brief exchange was, firstly, the student's decision to stop going to the window because it was not indicated in the script and, secondly, Petros' surprise that what worked for him creatively was actually a departure from the script's directions. Petros and the other T/Ds spent most of the time meticulously observing the stage directions, however there were still struggles over ideas about authorship. Below is a section from my field notes:

T/Ds have modified and altered the original scripts: left out entire scenes, merging/cutting/distributing lines, changing genders.

(Field notes April 2010).

The above comments, perfectly demonstrate the fraught nature of authorship in the theatre. T/Ds adapted the script in accordance with their ideas and to the ensemble's needs such as time issues and student numbers, for example. In this sense they entirely problematised the notion of the 'authentic' script. There was an exchange of authorship during the two rehearsal processes: there were moments that playwrights' directions remained almost intact and other times when T/Ds made important decisions to deviate from the given instructions. What resulted was a "classical balance of text and performance that allow(ed) the drama to progress at an unforced pace, with the rhetorical elements expected of the production reinforced by the design and sound plot" (Kennedy & Lan, 2010:51).

5.3. Side Coaching and Actor Embodiment

From the first rehearsal, the *Suitcase* process involved a very explicit discourse of 'making a performance' and this was manifested first of all in Petros' own words "It was all clearly stated from the beginning: we are heading towards a performance", and secondly in the way T/Ds would make all their instructions to the actors from outside and inside the stage space as they were stopping and starting scenes. These exchanges were distinctly reminiscent of a sports coach operating from the sideline or on the pitch, particularly since the directions concerned physicality.

Before exploring the coaching analogy, it would be beneficial to fully understand this term and its usage in relation to theatre directors. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the verb 'coach' as "to prepare [a candidate] for an examination; to instruct in social subjects; to tutor; to train for an athletic contest" (3:381). The same dictionary defines the word *teach* as "to show [someone] the way; to direct, conduct, convey, guide ... to impart or convey the knowledge of; to give instruction or lessons in [a subject]; to make known" (17:687-689). Another word that needs to be looked at is *direct*: "to regulate the course of; to guide, conduct, lead; to guide with advice, to advise"(4:701-704).

As can be seen, each of the above words embodies certain aspects of the others' definitions although each of the words has an explicit meaning when used in their own contexts. There is a difference, however, between the athletic coach and the theatre coach. The athletic coach still directs the team during its performance, with the team relying on the coach to make changes *during* the game. As Hodge states "they have a physical presence. They visibly run the performance" (Hodge, 1994: 3). A theatre director is more like a teacher. Both try to make the student independent, knowing that the student will not always have them on hand to help. When it comes to performing in

class or on stage there is no coach to assist them. They have to rely on their rehearsal experience and apply what they have learned on stage.

In both processes, after finishing the 'table work', T/Ds would go with the students onto the stage space explicitly to block the students' movements and gestures. In the first rehearsal of the *Fairytale* process, Sophia not only placed the students in certain positions but also the inanimate aspects of the scene: a huge chair was placed in the middle of the stage and dominated the whole space. This was the throne of the king; the student portraying the king was a dominant figure as well - both actor and prop explicitly representing the power of the ruler. Initially Sophia did not encourage the students to think about the 'internal' state of the character, instructing them to concentrate on the external:

Sophia: You are asleep, on your throne.

Student: But a king cannot sleep on his throne.

Sophia: Power sometimes gets tired you can snore if you want to.

Here Sophia was less concerned about how this physicality might alter the inner workings of the student and more taken up with how this 'sleeping condition' might look to observers who might perceive the King as "sleepy", that is, unaware of what is happening around him.

Sophia and Petros not only suggested general blocking but very specific embodiments and deliveries. They suggested particular gaits, and there were points when they took students' places on the stage and began pacing their movements. At one point Petros went on stage and began to pace backwards to the side wall whilst looking left and right: "Do you want to try it on this level?" he suggested to *Naz*¹. When Naz embodied this way of moving, other shifts followed: he used his eyes more, his face

¹ All names in italics represent characters' names.

twisted in an expression of fear and his body moved faster. I could not help but understand and see physically that Naz was stressed and scared.

On the other side of the city, Katerina would suggest postures, saying to *Poormother* "The body doesn't speak when you're sitting at the edge of the stage. It is unemotional but he enters the scene and that makes you feel something show it with your body". *Poormother* shifted her position and suddenly she and *Teacher* (student's role) seemed more engaged in action. Sophia also suggested deliveries: (to *Maria* -) "Spit it out. Extend the vowels". Sophia wanted the student to accentuate the vowels because, firstly, the lengthened line sounded more girly and at that point the student was flirting with the *prince* (student's role) and secondly, Sophia was concerned that the audience may not hear the line.

At a later rehearsal, of *Suitcase*, *Naz* was unsure how to react to his father's banging of pots and pans. He stood staring at him and *Father* (student's role) did not know what to do, continue the banging or wait for the next line to come. Petros, from the 'sideline', said, "Touch your father" which from my perspective looked remarkably like a puppeteer pulling strings. During another part of Act One, Petros crept onto the stage space while *Naz* delivered lines, and whispered, "Innocently, more innocently he is just a child". Immediately, without even stopping to explicitly register the direction, *Naz* stopped gesturing so much, shifted his bodyweight to the lower part of his body, and reduced the pitch-range of his voice.

While this form of 'side coaching' suggests a certain agency and manipulation on the part of the director, there were many moments throughout the period of rehearsals where the actors were responsible for suggesting and shaping the embodiments of characters and the subsequent meanings that might be generated; they were not merely

balls of clay waiting to be moulded. McAuley, writing about the creativity of actors, notes that:

A well-know designer, speaking to students about his work [...] referred to the 'creative people' in the production; when pressed to elaborate, he specified these as the director, the designer and the composer, and explicitly excluded the performers from this group (McAuley, 1999:85).

McAuley explicitly argues with the above quote. Actors are active agents as were the students, whose interpretations were always so rich in that; registering a few of the T/Ds' words, they were able to manipulate movement, gesture, pace, eye-contact, facial expression, and vocal delivery (pitch, register, rhythm, breath). Two metaphors that Katerina and Sophia from *Fairytale* often invoked had particular resonance with the S/As: they would tell them to "Give it to him/her", referring to delivery of lines. The actors interpreted this by delivering the line directly to the co-player, looking him/her in his/her eyes and speaking louder and stronger. Another favourite phrase was "Just sharpen that..." which they would accompany with "tuk tuk tuk" implying knife's sound on wood. In this case, they ensured that their exchanges were tight and clear and that one line directly affected the next line of the dialogue.

Petros, from *Suitcase*, would use the phrase "round it (the line)" and students immediately would speak more slowly, with clearer articulation and louder and stronger delivery. Another favourite sound metaphor used almost every other minute by Petros was a repeated quick click of his fingers which the students interpreted as meaning that lines were being delivered in a flat and 'colourless' manner. So although the meaning was present in students' word delivery, speed and voice 'colour' was needed.

McAuley might describe all the above as a third order of explicit spatial (and more generally 'embodied') direction within dialogue "that is not so clearly apparent to the general reader but which emerges in rehearsal when skilled, [practitioners] 'work' the text" (McAuley, 1999:26). The following exchange is another case in point:

Student 1 (*for his co-player student 2*): 'So I don't notice she's upset?'
Sophia: 'No you don't.' (*to student 2*) 'Just take it up a notch.'

Here Sophia wanted the student 'co-player' to offer his co-player more of a physical manifestation of being upset so that student 1 had a reason to console her. 'Up a notch' referred to increasing the intensity of the moment; however they did not discuss an inner intensity. So when student 2 paused, brought her hand to her face, breathed deeply and lowered her head, no-one asked what was happening 'inside' her. She extended her 'upsetness' by kneeling on the floor and beginning to cry. The important thing was that signs were being produced that could be read. This nuancing of student 2's performance would, according to Sophia, give student 1 a reason to console her and it would add more weight/gravity and meaning to the students' action.

In *Suitcase* rehearsals, practitioners were inclined to frame their work in terms of 'constructing a performance' when less naturalistic scenes were being rehearsed. In one of the rehearsals, the two students who portrayed the narrators Anna and Victoria were due to rehearse a scene from scene six which was eventually left out by Petros (T/D). Below is an extract from my rehearsal notes:

Petros today decided that he would give a summary of the scene, so that both the audience and the practitioners could follow Naz's journey without having a chasm in the meaning and in the continuity of the plot. Anna and Victoria had to co-ordinate the scene so as to be able to speak in synchronicity (Petros wanted both students to talk in unison). Seated at the table, Petros counted the students in - "One, two three" - and the students read though the scene as rhythmically as possible. After the read-through,

Anna smiled at the idea that she and Victoria would have to co-ordinate their performances "I will extend my arm before we start talking" she said and Petros laughed, "Yes, we need a very subtle cue". After one more read, Petros seemed absorbed by his own thoughts, perhaps anticipating how difficult this scene might be to co-ordinate on the floor, and said, "Let's go on the floor and stand it up". He got up from the table and Anna and Victoria followed. Standing in front of the two students, he explained how and where the two students should move. With the script in one hand, the students walked through the scene (this involved the suggested blocking from Petros). Because they were finding it hard to coordinate everything, Petros decided they should not do the blocking for a moment and he counted them in again. The students stood in the stage space, moving as little as possible with their hands shoved in the scripts. They decided that the unison-speaking section was almost like a chant.

Rehearsal notes from Suitcase process
February, 2010

This scene was unique for *Suitcase* practitioners. The discussion at the table was a strange mix of the type of talk that had gone on in previous rehearsals, that is, a search for psychological through-lines and 'real' people narrating a story, and the pragmatics of performing in synchronicity ("I will extend my arm"). Interestingly, once the actors moved onto the floor, this scene was never again contextualised within a psychological paradigm: the important thing was to ensure the performers moved together rhythmically. It was also clear that Petros could not find a way or a language in which to describe this scene to the students, instead this scene developed first and foremost through a shared embodiment. Anna and Victoria spent a number of rehearsals reading the lines together and moving in a line, becoming familiar with one another's rhythms, gesture and breath. It was one of many scenes of the play, but was the least talked about but amongst the most physically rehearsed, despite requiring very little physical involvement. Later in this section I will describe separately some of the scenes that involved a more physical context than a verbal one.

5.4. Awareness of Audience

During rehearsals, the extent to which practitioners in both processes framed their work as 'making a performance' was reflected in the way they explicitly referenced the audience. T/Ds and actors were acutely aware of the would-be spectators and they focussed on when the audience might laugh, where the audience might be sitting, and the audience as an adult/teen mix.

When a T/D gave the direction "Don't ever move on a laugh line", he/she referred to the cast remaining still when a 'laugh line' was delivered so that the audience had time to respond without cutting short their laughter through having to concentrate on the next piece of information (whether that be expressed through movement or the next piece of dialogue). Sophia, at some point said to a student: "You're going to have to learn when to come in with the [audience] laughter". Sophia referred to the student knowing when to begin speaking and moving while the audience is laughing. She explained that the student should become reanimated just as the laughter starts to die down, but not to wait for complete silence. What was interesting about this direction was that 'laugh lines' were treated as autonomous facts: Sophia would categorically refer to particular lines in this way, and it seemed unclear as to whether these were laugh lines because of the way they were written or because of the actor's delivery. In my opinion the majority of the laugh lines became so because of the actor's delivery. This left us with the presupposition that the audience would remain still or quiet during the 'serious' or 'dramatic' scenes. I was really surprised at how confident T/Ds felt in predicting the audience's reaction.

Throughout rehearsals, as actors were running sections, all T/Ds would move to different places around the room. For instance Petros, during the *Suitcase* rehearsals, would move and sit on the left and right sides as well as directly in front. When he first

moved he smiled at the students, saying, "You are going to have to get used to it". In the *Fairytale* rehearsal room, Sophia was the one who would move from left to right and from the front to the back of the very big room. I was the only onlooker who would sit in a static position in every rehearsal. (I will speak about my position in the next chapter). What the teachers wanted the actors to understand was how they might be watched from different aspects of the room. Interestingly, it was not until *Fairytale's* students visited the theatre and saw the auditorium and the circle (both the ensembles were already familiar with the theatres as they had previously been there either as audience or as performers in previous productions) and one said: "I had forgotten that there was a circle section in the theatre". No matter how prepared they thought they were in rehearsals, the physical reality of the theatre space still came as something of a shock. As I wrote in the methodology chapter, both theatres venues had a proscenium stage.

The S/As were encouraged by T/Ds to move positions and even to come to the front edge of the stage to ensure that the whole audience could see S/As' faces and to enable them to be heard by audience members in the auditorium as well as the circle seats. The importance of the audience was apparent throughout the rehearsal processes and all T/Ds made sure that everyone remembered that an audience would be present in performance. For instance, Petros during *Suitcase* rehearsals questioned students:

*Petros: Where is the specific gravity in this sentence? What exactly is your agony? For you and for your spectator?*¹

Here, Petros considers audience participation not just through watching the performance but by the feelings generated and communicated between actors and audience during the performance. Hansen (1986:15) says that the importance of theatre lies in the immediate interaction between the audience and the actor: "the character

¹ From the *Suitcase's* rehearsal, 27 February 2010.

would address the audience and the audience would send a message back to the character ...”.

In another instance from *Fairytale* rehearsals the following dialogue took place:

Student: In which direction do I say my line?

*Katerina: Towards the audience*¹

S/As seem to have understood in which “direction” to utter their line, either to their co-players or to the audience. They seemed to have realised that a) there are important lines with which to address the audience; b) they were in accordance with T/Ds instructions about addressing the audience at certain points; c) they would consider audience as a co-player and not a disembodied factor of the performance d) the audience was an extension of what was going on onstage. T/Ds believed that the plays would speak to the audiences in a very personal way, not because the performances had been created by their children or classmates but also because of the political/social/economic situation of the country. In both *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*, then, discourses were associated with talk about audience: both works were framed in terms of constructing meaning, in ways in which audience members can interpret meanings.

5.5. Relationships in the Rehearsal Room

This section concerns the way S/As were conceptualised in the two processes, and, specifically the relationship between the S/As and T/Ds. In theatre and rehearsal literature there is both an explicit and implicit figuring of the director-actor exchange in terms of a parent-child, a teacher-student (this represents the reality) or an analyst-analysed relationship. Director Lindy Davies encourages actors, in her words, to “play,

¹ From *Fairytale*’s Rehearsals, 13 March, 2010

like children in a way" (in Adamson, 2001:15); Michael Leiberto's advice to would-be directors is as follows: "You may want your actors to be as uninhibited as children, but you must treat them like the adults they are in order to avoid a 'summer camp' mentality" (in Benedetti, 1985:110); Mnouchkin explains "there is something in the actor's work that obliges him or her, not to fall back into childhood, but to enter childhood" (Feral, 1989:40). Bear in mind that in these two productions students had just left their childhood. The irony for the teenagers would be that they had to delve into their childhood, which was not very distant from where they were now, in order to portray adult characters.

This teacher-student model was apparent throughout the rehearsal period in both processes. None of the T/Ds deserted their professional roles since they constantly had to draw students' attention back to the rehearsal. Here is an extract from my rehearsal fieldnotes:

I am here because I want to be here. You are here because you wanted to be here. No one forced you to participate. It is a voluntary obligation. This does not mean that you have the right to behave in such a way. You haven't stopped fussing around and talking since you came into the room. Where is your commitment? I am here to get the best out of you in order to present a professional performance. I would not want to present something lukewarm. If this is what you want, it is better to stop it now. You have to work for it.

(Petros, from transcription, March 12th 2010).

Similarly, director John Dexter accused one of his actors of "just trying to get attention" (Hiley, 1981:133) and said to another one, "You've been screaming and bleating for four weeks and now you've forgotten the move" (*ibid*:118). In another account of a rehearsal process, Giorgio Strehler reprimanded the actors, "I always push to make the best that is possible, you understand? My intention isn't to attack you, but to

make you better. But you are lazy. Yes, lazy!” (Trousdel, 1986:80). Sofia uttered almost identical words during one of the *Fairytale* rehearsals:

You are here again this week without knowing your lines. Katerina and I tried all week to write down all the props we will need for the performance and the only thing we asked for from you was to learn your lines. We both know that you have many things to do during the week but you were committed to that before we even started the process. I would like to remind you, you were the ones who asked for a production this year. Sophia and I offered to support your wishes. And now we are chasing you to remain committed. Excuse me but this is your job. Laziness has no place in this process.

(Sophia, from transcription, 5th March 2010).

Director, Michael Lieber explains that, “Actors need to make mistakes on their own” in order to see the difference between different attempts to interpret the script. The T/Ds’ job is to guide, to teach them (in Benedetti, 1985:6). This teaching, nurturing and telling off on the part of the director extends to a counselling role, seen for instance, in Cole’s account of Emily Mann directing a scene from *Execution of Justice*:

When I [Cole] first see this rehearsed, John Spencer, playing Dan White, is crying so profusely that the actor playing the police inspector leaves the scene and returns momentarily with Kleenex to wipe the face of the actor whose hands remain handcuffed behind his back. Continuing to cry during his confession speech, the actor loses his lines several times, saying at one point, ‘I don’t know where I am’ (an unscripted line). At the end of the scene the director compliments Spencer: “John, it’s wonderful”. She rubs his shoulder and back quietly, and then walks away, still visibly moved, to compose herself. (Cole, 1992:61).

Petros was sparing in his praise of the students and even more reserved in showing his emotions when a scene would go well, that is if it had touched us, the audience. I recall in one rehearsal of the "Drowning Scene", S/As were on the 'boat'. Narrators started to introduce the scene while students started doing the sound effects (there was no recorded sound at this point) on cue. The agony and the emotion were being built up superbly by the two S/As on the 'boat'; similarly the narrator added to the tension. The

'wind' was becoming stronger; the 'waves' higher; the S/As revolved around themselves faster; even stronger winds; higher 'waves'; S/As cannot be heard anymore; a sound of a thump on the floor; no, it was not a thump, it was a splash on the water; then screams for help; then another splash; and then silence; S/A - the girl - murmured "Where am I" (unscripted line). I whispered "Bravo"; Petros followed: "Bravo" and he turned his face away. He did not want to be seen with tears in his eyes.

The figuring of the director-actor relationship in terms of parent-child or teacher-student also slips into metaphors of the director-as-mind and actor-as-body. Director and actor Joseph Chaikin explains that in rehearsals, "The actor says, 'Be my eyes, I can't see' and the director says, 'You're the body; you're the embodiment of this thing'" (Pegnato, 1981:13). Suzan Cole describes theatre rehearsal as a series of concentric circles - the outermost circle is the director's vision while the innermost is "the more intimate space of the actor's imagination" (Cole, 1992:20). This intriguing spatial trope invokes particular binaries and metaphors: the director's mind/vision and the actor's body/imagination; the director's outside perspective and the actor's inside feeling. Concentric circles also assume an image of things subsumed: in this case, the space of an S/A's creativity was in fact a subset of T/Ds' all-encompassing vision. In this case T/Ds are figured as the ones that hold a powerful place in the rehearsal room.

Having encountered this material as I was conducting the fieldwork, I was especially sensitive to those director-actor exchanges where the directors 'became' parents-teachers. For instance all T/Ds were considered the most knowledgeable about the playscript. S/As would defer to the directors for clarification of 'meanings'. Moreover T/Ds encouraged the actors to talk about social issues, to voice their opinions and to engage in a degree of self-analysis. However, despite this, and despite the wealth

of literature pointing to the infantilisation of the actor, the S/As were anything but patronised or pathologised. Instead, there was a distinct sense that S/As were just getting on with the job, an aspect of the process which I will consider next.

5.6. Working Together

The philosophy of 'collective creation' as an alternative approach to text-based theatre has frequently foregrounded the empowerment of actors by allowing them to contribute to the development of creating the performance, as distinct from the mainstream practice of the director dictating to the actor (Pavis, 1998). The creation of these performances was decided between T/Ds and S/As. In Marxist terms, the actor is thus part of "Theatre collectives and collaborative creation" (Fortier, 1998:8). Theatre design was developed within rehearsal and there were lengthy rehearsals in order to decide on costumes, music and setting. The set design for *Suitcase* represented a compromise between *a priori* decision making and being conscious of what was 'offered' by the rehearsal space and the theatre itself. The desks and the boxes used in the actual performance 'drive' the play and S/As did indeed push, pull, turn and arrange the desks across and around the stage in a variety of configurations that altered both the "stage space and gestural space" from scene to scene and from image to image. Patrice Pavis defines:

Gestural space ... [as] the space created by the actors' movements ... while ... stage space ... is limited by the structure of the building. (Pavis, 1998:163)

Both spaces are shaped by the set design and *vice versa*. The fact that the S/As in *Suitcase* were themselves moving the desks/boxes from scene to scene meant that

they were, during performance, determining a dynamically changing 'stage space' through their own 'gestural space' (Pavis, 1998:163). For instance, during the 'Drowning Scene', S/As moved the table to the middle of the stage to define the 'stage space' then, when they were playing the scene and were talking about the rain to come, they extend their hands to define the beginning of the rain; a gesture thereby defining the space.

In an analogous way, costume designs for *Suitcase* developed 'through rehearsal' and emerged only when the character's 'state' had been identified and not before. This would seem to be the opposite of how it occurred in the *Fairytale* process. Due to the play's format, role characteristics were identifiable through character names - for instance 'King', 'Queen', 'Teacher'. However, T/Ds and S/As had the opportunity to improvise on the creation of the costumes for even *Fairytale* did not follow the mainstream pattern of a designer dictating to the actor. Costume resulted from mutual decision-making between T/Ds and S/As. Simon Callow, for example, has remarked that:

Every actor has bitter experience of costumes which have betrayed his conception of the part ... [and he prefers a] passionate bartering on both sides, the designer fighting for her vision, the actors for theirs: a very healthy relationship (Callow, 1984:160).

The actors presented their choices and, in both cases T/Ds either accepted the choices, or chose between one of several options on offer. Overall, the setting, costume and music were decided by T/Ds and S/As working together and this approach foregrounded "the physical reality of the action and the actor's presence" by offering the S/As flexibility within a fluid design structure (in Parsons, 1995:218).

Throughout the rehearsal processes T/Ds actively sought - through the reading, discussion, first run and blocking of the play - both intellectual and instinctual responses from S/As. Both groups could subsequently work from a shared platform from which the performance could spring. All four T/Ds spent considerable time deciding where to place the desks/props and S/As at the beginning of the rehearsal of each scene. Mainly, they were exploring their own ideas and often changed their minds in determining how to start a scene. Arguably, the T/Ds explored the blocking possibilities within scenes as much as they could within the time limits of the rehearsal and stamina of the S/As.

Both technical-rehearsals reflected the above approaches and were a radical alternative to the traditional approach. Petros, for instance, in one of the technical-rehearsals rejected working in the traditional manner of arriving at lighting cues, preferring to work through the play slowly, making decisions from 'within' rather than imposing something upon the production (Stewart, 1996). Such a process sometimes included re-working parts of scenes, images or even the whole act, as T/Ds thought was required. This was in fact a kind of re-rehearsal of the play to specifically accommodate not only new elements of light and sound, but any possible late changes in thought or in creation over existing blocking of the scenes. Katerina, for instance, during the lighting technical rehearsal, made changes in the blocking and consequently in the acting because there was no suitable lantern to shed light on the actor's action.

This form of rehearsal seemed to me to be an opportunity for T/Ds and S/As to 'play' with all the 'ingredients' of the theatre event. These 'ingredients' included the setting, lighting, sound and even S/As themselves who, now they knew who their characters were, were "... finally in their ... costumes." (in Stewart, 1996:16). T/Ds extended these tech-rehearsals in order to facilitate the fine-tuning of all these ingredients and for S/As to have the time to fully exploit them. This extra time with all

the components of the “physical pieces of theatre coming together” would enable the theatre event in its entirety to “bloom” and “give out energy” so that the audience would be given “insight” and “warmed by it” (in Stewart, 1996:16).

CHAPTER 5. Pulling Together all the Discovered Elements

5.1. Introduction

In this section I will examine all the obvious elements of the performance: the music, props, costumes, and the rhythm of the performance. There are other elements of the performance which, in my opinion, cannot be examined at a pragmatic level and that is what was going on subconsciously during the preparation of the two productions. There are these ‘elements’ that you *know*, you feel them but you cannot describe the ineffable. As Stanislavski claims the ‘being’ of a performance is consists of nature – real- and the subconscious. (Stanislavski, 2009)

For both the *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* practitioners, the presence of various elements of production – for instance, props, costume, music, sound, visiting the theatres – was closely connected to a discourse of practitioners’ capacities to make meanings in the performance. The more these elements were foregrounded, the more talk of ‘constructing a performance’ was generated. From the very early *Fairytale* rehearsals, the practitioners had organised many props to be in place; not the ‘real’ props but ones which served as acceptable substitutes: a chair for the throne; a rectangular box for the ironing board; school chairs became tavern chairs; plastic cups served as wine glasses. Each was in its place as the S/As entered the stage space. Moreover, Sophia and Katerina were quick to provide S/As with props whenever they asked:

Student: What about the river?

Sophia: I brought a long blue cloth to put on the floor to show that the river stretches between you and the rest of the world.

This level of organisation, and Sophia's and Katerina's awareness of and promptness in providing the elements of production, created the sense that the performance was somehow (partially) fixed before rehearsals began; that both T/Ds wanted to provide the production elements as soon as possible as they believed that S/As worked better when they had all the props for the scene under rehearsal and lastly, both T/Ds wanted to make it easier for the S/As to focus on learning lines and the development of their characters. The use of props, even from the first rehearsal was totally co-ordinated with the other elements of the performance – music and lights for example. Conversely, the *Suitcase* rehearsal process did not require lots of props, at least to begin with. Petros and Maria began the rehearsal process using props found in the rehearsal room: school chairs and students' desks to form a bus, a ship, a harbour dock, even mountains; their own clothes for the sewing scene; The props in rehearsal had occupied the same volume as the props used in the actual performance. This might be a reason that Petros and Maria provided the actual props relatively late. What was needed next for both processes were music and sound which I will examine separately in the following section.

5.2. Music and Sound: as main characters¹

Extract from my fieldwork notes on *Suitcase* rehearsals

The rehearsal starts with practicalities: the synchronisation between speech and music; between S/As and the music/sound manager. Petros asks the students to give cues to the music/sound manager so as s/he knows where to insert the music.

Students started messing around and made a lot of noise. Petros got angry: "I will leave the rehearsal if you do not stop. I have no time to waste. If you did not want to have a rehearsal today you should have told me earlier and I would not have bothered

¹Characters usually refers to actors' roles. I use the word on purpose since the music played the role of a character in the play having, on many occasions, a 'dialogue' with an actor. For example: 'Separation Scene', where *Naz's mother says* goodbye to *Naz*, or in *Fairytale* where music bridges from one scene to another and functions as a dialogue with the audience.

to come over here. You still have time to decide - to forget about the performance, to return home¹.

The students eventually became quieter and the rehearsal started.

Petros gives instructions while the music is on. S/As seemed to focus on both the instructions and on the music cues. It seems that his threats worked. They listen to the instruction while they are rehearsing. This is a skill that they acquired throughout the rehearsal. Petros reinforced it during the whole process.

At some point the rehearsal stops. It was the S/As who made that happen. They wanted to block the scene according to the music cues. They wanted to get synchronized with each other and with the music. Petros allowed it and S/As made their own arrangements and corrections.

The rehearsal continues. Petros interrupts it. He gives more specific instruction on how the 'drowning scene' should be played...He gives clear instruction on when the music should be loud and when the volume should be lowered so the student is able to be heard by the audience. He gives the exact cues to both the music/sound manager and to the narrators; the music should not overlap the speech.

Rehearsal notes from fieldwork, 23th April 2010

Like the use of props, music and costumes were foregrounded as conscious and necessary performance elements. The great philosopher Roger Scruton observes:

Nobody who understands the experiences of melody, harmony, and rhythm will doubt their value. Not only are they the distillation of centuries of social life: they are also forms of knowledge, providing the competence to reach out of ourselves through music. Through melody, harmony, and rhythm, we enter a world where others exist besides the self, a world that is full of feeling but also ordered, disciplined but free. That is why music is a character-forming force, and the decline of musical taste a decline in morals (Scruton, 1999:502).

Music is a force (see Scruton) that forms others' characters and, at the same time, has its own role in the performance: that of a quasi protagonist, which is always there, even when it is not heard, working in the souls of all persons on the stage. Music is with them, in them, upon the action, hidden but loudly heard inside them. Let's just imagine

¹This actually happened though in a later rehearsal. I will examine this in the next chapter. Here T.D acted in a more authoritative way, more as a teacher, I would say.

what would happen in the performance(s) if music and the songs were not there. Their absence would be there, as if one of the play's –often major - characters was absent.

The music was not only used in transition between acts but also within the fiction. In the case of *Fairytale*, the music had been composed when the play was first staged in 1959¹. Since then, the drama and music had been played together "as individual entities ... Without compelling one to try to explain and to react to the other,... [their] chemical reaction [results in] a new entity" (David Raskin)². In other words, the drama is inseparable from its music. *Fairytale*'s music was played live by a small orchestra consisting of school students; the orchestra was placed stage right, between the stage and the auditorium. It seemed as if its position denoted its role, between the 'now' of the stage and what comes 'after'. The music was used out of necessity to bridge the scenes and to smooth the transition between the many "images" of the play (Kampanellis, 1996). The playwright himself wrote the lyrics and asked a famous Greek composer to compose the music³.

The music ensemble consisted of various musicians: a guitarist, a violinist, a pianist, a bassist and a tenor singer, all students from the same school year as the S/As. The students had two tasks: to learn the songs to understand where the cues were. They had to remain focussed throughout the rehearsal to listen for cues. This was really hard at the beginning of the rehearsals since no-one knew the play or where the music should start. There was also an additional obstacle to overcome: two of the musicians were taking part in the play. There were moments when they would go on stage to deliver their lines before moving offstage to grab their instruments and start playing the link music. T/Ds had an additional task to do with these two students: to smooth their stage

¹See Appendix 1.

² http://www.filmmusicsociety.org/news_events/features/2003/102403.html.

³ See Appendix 1.

exits and entrances. For instance, after the 'Fighting Scene', Markos had to play the guitar immediately. He did not have time to step down off the stage to get his guitar and play. Sophia, T/D, told one of the musicians to place the guitar at the right side and on the stage; when Markos finished his part as S/A, he walked towards the side of the stage, sat at its edge with his feet hanging over the edge, picked up the guitar and accompanied the ensemble. It was amazing that not only the music bridged the scenes but even the bodies themselves: this S/A was sitting in the 'in-between' state - his body sitting on the stage and his legs hanging off stage bore witness to the 'now' - what was happening on stage, and the 'after' of the scenes.

Similarly, in *Suitcase* there was a short period of live music in the 'Bus Scene'. In my fieldnotes I wrote:

It is the 'Bus' Scene. The students form the bus: they put chairs in rows of two, diagonally on the stage. The formation of the chairs gives perspective to the bus. The front seat is just for the driver. Students take the place of passengers. The father escorts Naz to the bus station. Naz realises that he will get on the bus on his own, without his parents. The driver starts the engine, Naz starts crying, asking for his parents. The driver shouts at him and tells him to sit down. In despair Naz sits down. At this moment a passenger takes out the violin and starts playing a traditional Greek song. Naz's mother looks at the bus fading away and starts singing the song about foreign lands. This is the only moment where live music and live singing appear in the play.

The Bus Scene



From the above excerpt we can see Petros' intervention not just in the direction of the play but also in the formation¹ of the play. He added elements that do not exist in the initial plot. By adding the live music and the singing, Petros a) made a cultural integration: he added a traditional Greek song to a non-specific play in terms of homeland; b) he created a contemporary play that could 'speak' to the heart and memory of the students; c) he managed to co-ordinate live music with the recorded form perfectly and d) underlined the continuity and repetition of historical/social events: the song depicted a mother mourning for her son who was emigrating to a foreign country which perfectly matched the point in the storyline as *Naz* was also emigrating.

There were moments during the rehearsals in both processes where the S/As would ask for the 'music carpet'; that is, the musical theme that accompanied their scene. This possibly helped them to create an inner mood and contributed to the creation of their characters. The power of music, as well as other media, to motivate the

¹Formation has to do more with the blocking while directing might involve teaching as well.

emotions of the students has already been recognised: in Melbourne's Victoria Drama School Curriculum there is a note of advice to the teachers to "use other art forms such as painting, poetry, sculpture, digital photography or music as a stimulus for character creation" (Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design, 2006:39). In the 'Bus Scene' of *Suitcase*, when the violin played the sad melody, the S/A's reaction became bigger, his sobbing more intensive. Meyerhold states that "Emotion does not come from the inner working of the mind but from an outside stimulus, from 'physical positions and situations'. Emotion is, in effect, a reflex" (Meyerhold, in Pitches, 2003:72). The live music on the bus 'acts' as another passenger. The sound of the violin itself mourns Naz's separation from his parents, "The music is a character ... has its own voice" (Regan, 1994:6).

In *Fairytale*, in the 'War Scene'¹ where *Theodora*, the ambassador of the kingdom, dies, the people of the kingdom, (all characters are on stage) are devastated. The Queen collapses, people hug each other in despair and then the orchestra starts to play a sad song. The S/As sing the song as a chorus of an ancient Greek tragedy. The 'music' here 'has its own voice'; the song as a messenger of an ancient tragedy informs the audience how the characters on the stage feel and at the same time the characters, by alienating themselves from the sad event, get ready for the next scene; "music is a character in its own right that drives the situation along" (interview, Ludivile Sagnier)².

Here is another excerpt from my fieldnotes regarding how the music was chosen:

Petros would like to see students' suggestions about the recorded music. He said that he had already chosen some musical pieces which

¹The aforementioned scenes will be examined separately further down in the chapter.

² <http://bettermost.net/forum/index.php/topic,18293.msg355231.html#msg355231>.

he would bring to the next rehearsal. Indeed the next Saturday he brought the chosen music. Orestis was the only one of the students who brought musical pieces to 'dress' certain parts of the play. He suggested more of a rock theme. The students agreed with his opinion while T/D Petros defended his choice. Petros tried to explain that his theme was a modern one from a Greek film about the lost homelands. Orestis said "it might be good for people that had experienced foreign lands but the play is tough and it needs more of a rock sense in it ... The protagonists are teenagers, putting themselves in various risky situations; life was hard for them; the music needs to be more rock". Petros insisted: "The opening theme has to be smoother. Naz does not know what is ahead of him. The audience does not need to know about the cruelty to come". Finally Petros convinced them about the opening scene. For the closing scene the students suggested a rock adaptation of the Eurhythmics "Sweet dreams".

Ultimately, in the opening scene of *Suitcase*, there was just the suitcase in the middle of the stage, spotlighted, with the rest of the scene in darkness. A light, a suitcase and the music theme from the Greek film¹ chosen by Petros were the only elements on the stage. There were no people on the stage, no movement, no other props; the only 'character' present was the music; "the music set the tone" of the play. (William, interview²). Petros' selection of music is another of his attempts to infuse cultural elements into a foreign play, written by a foreign playwright. Theatre permits these forms of interventions and amendment: ancient tragedies are often staged in a contemporary way and Shakespeare's plays have been staged with contemporary costumes and rock music, for example. The aims are simply to adapt and adjust the play in accordance with the ensemble's needs and skills without altering its fundamental meaning; but surely the director's vision is the dominant factor.

Based on the data, music played a major part in the progress of the rehearsals. In *Fairytale* both T/Ds, Katerina and Sophia, devoted extra time in rehearsals to the music

¹Politiki Kouzina (Cuisine of Polis= this is how the Greeks call Constantinople).

²http://xinkaishi.typepad.com/a_new_start/2009/01/ny-times-listening-to-schroeder-peanuts-scholars-find-messages-in-cartoons-scores-.html.

ensemble. They scheduled extra times and days during the week so that the ensemble would be ready for the Saturday rehearsals. In *Suitcase*, the music was very important for both Petros and the students, evidenced by the strong creative discussions that took place.

5.3. Rhythm of performance

What is rhythm when it comes to an art such as theatre? In the Greek language the word *rhythmos*

means "measured motion," although classical theorists generally understood rhythm to be a bond, meaning a restraint or interruption imposed on an established stimulus, whether of sound, vision, or other sensation. (Woodbury, 1962:25).

Kenneth McLeish in his book *A Guide to Greek Theatre and Drama* (2003) claims that all plays in ancient Greek were written in verse. Since Homer's time, verse had been used to articulate action, character and emotion. Verses were organised in patterns based on the different 'lengths' of syllables. A 'long' syllable, for example the 'hope' in 'hopeless', was considered three times as long as a 'short' syllable, for example the 'hot' in 'hothouse'. Each of the available patterns thus gave the verse its own unique speed and character, in other words its own rhythm.

McLeish goes on to support the idea that the words consisted of specific rhythm. For example, the word Oedipus has three syllables, long-short-long or 3-1-3, and that affected the sound and the movement in the production. Of course, the exact movement provoked by the rhythm of the words are now lost to us, but the different physical movements produced in an actor's body were a result of the words as they sounded.

In the art of theatre, where the canvas is emotions and the materials are human

bodies, spoken language and transformative physical spaces, a director always finds him/herself working on several levels to integrate all of these into a larger whole, that of performance. It is an intuitive and intellectual task. But it is mostly the integration of many elements into a painstaking assembly of details; of layering different meaning; of building up characters to a point where the smallest adjustment resonates deeply inside the structure of the piece. For example, cutting down some parts of the play, or re-adjusting some scenes due to the shortage of male S/As, or even doubling roles, change the initial rhythm of the theatre play given by the playwright.

Any piece of theatre has easily discernible rhythms: First is the overall rhythm of the theatre piece. How it move from the unknown to complication, to a place that one can sense, faintly, where the lift-off point of that rhythm is at the beginning of rehearsal and generally when a director reads a play for first time she can perceive where a performance will deepen, but only faintly. So, the process of rehearsal, as it has been witnessed, is the organisation of all the elements - from the design to the acting – which then allows the director to search for and build and in turn release this grand and powerful rhythm. Often, inexperienced T/Ds construct performances that require blackouts and extensive changes to get from one scene to the next.

In most school performances this cannot happen as the requisite logistics are not available. A T/D, as a designer of the school performance, must nonetheless create fluidity. This is not new: ancient open Greek theatres and Shakespeare's Globe theatre were the perfect designs with their limitless abilities, and this allowed for an effortless sense of transition.

Second, a T/D has to build the individual rhythm within each S/A and each scene and this is a very slow process. The relationship of a T/D to a group of S/As is the

complex negotiation of many stories into one, over a course of an event or of an arc of action which is the play. Each individual moment and event must be explored and tied together through scenes. For example there were moments where all T/Ds experienced problems with particular scenes in the play, such as the “Drowning Scene” or the “Recognition Scene” from *Suitcase*. The problem did not lie with these scenes themselves but rather their set-up; Petros had to look at the preceding scenes in order to find the cause of his trouble in the current one: whether he had made some error in tone, in subtext, in an individual moment or in a building block. If this rhythmic baseline was missing earlier in the piece, Petros found, that pace and crescendo of his current scene was struggling to be found.

Third is the rhythm to be found in transitioning from scene to scene. A director always needs to ask what happens during these scene connectors. For example, in *Fairytale*, where the connectors were musical parts, T/Ds still needed to construct - through movement and design - a path through transitions that kept the story’s power and direction. Petros, working on scene transitions, had problems connecting said scenes as there were no guidelines from the playwright either. He had to choose musical themes or songs in order to serve both his and the playwrights’ intention at the same time. There was also another set of voices that had to be satisfied - that of S/As - as they too had strong opinion on the musical themes and rhythms used for transition. The director of a performance therefore has to search and discover this ‘inward sound’ of the theatre piece, with his actors willing and able to keep to the beat.

Audiences have rhythms too. In many ways theatre has becoming the activity of resetting personal rhythms and providing some strange antidote to the experience of contemporary life. For example, any given audience member would enter the theatre having spent an entire day juggling several forms of communication, from a computer

to a blackberry to a television set. We are operating in a continual state of partial awareness concentrating simultaneously on several layers of our life. To even enter the theatre, sitting in a dark space, not talking to anybody, shutting off our communication devices and suddenly being pulled into a singular rhythm outside of the norm is becoming a more radical and transforming event.

People congenially struggle through the first twenty minutes of such events. It is like de-programming. A new rhythm is imposed on the audience in the form of an 18th century opera, or an ancient Greek tragedy, or a contemporary theatre piece or indeed a school theatre performance. The rhythm of the above is different and it acts upon a contemporary person in a radical way. For example, *Fairytale* is a theatre piece written in the 1950s when the pace of life was so much slower than life in today's modern cities. Although the school production was adapted to reflect contemporary concerns, it remained faithful to the era of the 50s with its costumes and music (since the music had already been scored for the original play) and so the audience were pulled into the rhythm of the era in which the play was written. Consequently, they were able to experience something different from their everyday lives. with the exception perhaps of some of the S/As' grandparents for whom the production might bring back memories of their childhood.

Theatre requires a text. In school production, the task of the director is to use acting, design, sound lights to uncover the deeper rhythm of this text. Each text has its own laws. And there are endless ways or revealing or changing the content of any narrative by adjusting its rhythm during the directing process.

5.4. The costumes

In both processes the costumes were created and discussed mainly between the two T/Ds. However, S/As had their say too. The *Fairytale* process was the most complex production in terms of costumes as it required costumes that identified the various roles and social order. Appropriate costumes were needed for the king, queen, princess, tavern woman, man of honour, soldier, barber and the foreman. From the first rehearsals, costumes were a constant factor and the majority of the students chose their costumes at an early stage. All the costumes were 'homemade': that is students or teachers would bring clothes and textiles from their homes and, having chosen the appropriate combinations, would make the costume. Lots of discussion involving teachers and students took place in order to decide what was the most appropriate costume for each role.

The student portraying the king had created his own costume from scratch; from head to toe. He bought the wig, he sewed the costume and he created the shoes. You could not help but laugh at what he created - a king with a funny costume. What an antithesis: the ridiculousness of a tragic, powerful figure moving around the stage and provoking nothing but laughter and pity to begin with. The student's physical appearance matched the notion of the ruler's power: he was a big teenage boy, tall, a little clumsy when he walked and his costume made him look even clumsier; even funnier was the clumsiness of power¹. His body, including physical appearance and costume, served to deepen the role. Whenever he 'walked tall' in order to exhibit more of his power, he became even funnier. Both Katerina and Sophia directed him to exaggerate his gestures and his comedic facial expressions. There were moments when

¹ That raises the issue of physicality and the assignment of a role to students with regard to their psychology.

he almost became a caricature. He may ridicule himself but never the character he portrayed¹

T/Ds had chosen the costumes carefully and in such detail that you could tell immediately who the character was. The Queen wore a long maxi dress covered in small colourful flowers; their son, jeans and army boots: youth and power; the foreman - portrayed by a girl - wore a blue, whole-body uniform with a workman's hat on her head in order to cover her very long hair. The barber wore a classic white robe; the admiral sported a fake beard and a captain's hat; the smith wore black clothes, characteristic of his rather dirty job. His daughter, with her hair in two plaits captured her youthful innocence; her aunty, dressed in a long, loose skirt with her shoulders covered with a long shawl, seemed to suggest that she was concealing her feelings from the teacher who wore contemporary clothes and was shoeless, seen as his protest against the unfairness and injustice in his homeland. A long apron was enough for the tavern-woman; whilst the two outlaws - roles intended to be played by men but now portrayed by girls - wore loose clothes, trousers and shirt - and covered their hair with hats. The rest of the S/As wore contemporary clothes.

This combination of fancy/traditional and contemporary clothes bridged the gap between 'then' and contemporary Greece where events could be seen to mirror what was happening on stage. Members of the music ensemble were dressed in their everyday clothes. The reasons for this were the fact that two of the students were playing characters in the play and the T/Ds wanted to indicate the contemporariness and the timelessness of the music which was written 50 years ago.

¹ That reminds me of my drama teacher, Maya Lymberopoulou who, when I was studying in Drama School said 'if you are not able to ridicule yourselves then you will not be able to portray the character you will be called on to enact.'

In *Suitcase*, Petros and Maria asked the students to wear every-day clothes. The only extra costumes they needed were a coat for the student who portrayed the body-trafficker and a couple of army uniforms for the soldiers that invaded the bus when *Naz* left his house. Here the students did not have the advantage of a costume to support their role. Petros might argue that this was because there was no difference between the children that were forced to leave their countries and the students who participated in the performance. As Markos stated when he justified his music choice: “they are teenagers of our age” (from the transcript, 23 March 2010).

5.5. Props as characters

From my fieldnotes.

It is the dress rehearsal. The stage is pitch black. The music starts and sets the atmosphere of the moment. It is so quiet in the room you could hear a pin drop. A spot sheds light slowly on the centre of the stage and we can see a suitcase in the middle of it. Nothing else. No one there but the music, the spotlight and the suitcase, one of the protagonists. The boy is still missing.

From fieldnotes, May 1st 2010

For Stanislavski “Props were extensions of the characters” (in Pia, 2006:126)¹. To my knowledge there are a few well-known plays in which playwrights use props as a main element of the performance. For example in Cocteau’s *Human Voice*, where the actress speaks over the phone to her lover and the phone absorbs all her reactions and feelings for the *voice*: love, tenderness, desperation, anger. Similarly in Beckett’s “Krap’s last tape” where the protagonist speaks on a tape recorder recording his voice, as though the cassette is the person he talks to.

¹ Pia, A. (2006) *Acting the Truth: the Acting Principles of Constantin Stanislavski and Exercises: A Handbook for Actors, Directors, and Instructors of Theatre*, AuthorHouse.

In *Suitcase* props had different uses and meaning, the use of props was minimal. Boxes would be transformed into objects necessary for the continuity of the plot. S/As would use the props according to the director's guidance and the playwright's instructions. Rectangular boxes provided by the people who were in charge of the theatre stood in the wings until they were needed to play 'their role', for example: 'a bed', 'bus seats', 'mountains', 'a boat', 'sewing machines' and 'a car'. During the rehearsal period, the props listed above were represented either by students' desks or students' chairs. S/As or T/Ds would put them in different positions to represent the props: for instance, upside-down chairs became 'sewing machines'; two students' desks put together formed the boat for the 'Drowning Scene'; students' chairs placed in rows of two became the bus and two chairs together became the car for the penultimate scene. By the time we reached the dress rehearsal, desks and chairs had been replaced by the rectangular boxes.

With the opening scene of *Suitcase*, Petros tried to draw the audience emotionally into the simplicity of a lone suitcase in the middle of the stage. It was hard not to be captivated by this image, by this 'immobilised' object. The suitcase, this visual motif, was used as an emotional transaction – standing alone in the middle of the stage it generated a quality of unease. It is such a static, lifeless object with the peculiar task of being a placeholder for a real person or, in *Naz's* world, a companion and a lifeguard as I will explain in the "Drowning Scene". As such it is an object waiting for its narrative, yet with a set of often disturbing features that give a particular character from the onset - so pragmatic, almost physical at times (as in the 'Drowning Scene'). Here, the suitcase is at times object, character, and protagonist. Petros wanted the suitcase itself to be the mode of the discourse on the character it portrayed, in other words to 'speak for itself'.

In my opinion Petros, accurately, reshaped the physical world of an 'empty space' (Peter Brook, 1968) and adapted it to a 'living space' by putting an inanimate trivial object, a suitcase, in the middle of the stage. His purposes were to magnify audience vision and to generate audience imagination by using it, the prop, as an actor for the opening scene. He wanted the audience to look at the props "like characters, each with their own personality and back story" (Kris Peck, website¹). In other words, in this particular scene the story deployed by the prop.

In the case of *Fairytale*, the props served the story. Each prop was placed to serve a particular purpose and their usage was more naturalistic. A throne 'played' a throne, an ironing board was an ironing board, an oven pan was an oven pan; a gallows which dominated the second scene of the play, the 'Court Scene'. To make the scene with the outlaws who were hiding by the bank of the river more naturalistic, T/Ds brought reeds and built a reed wall for the outlaws to be concealed. The only *metaphorical* use of an object was a long piece of blue cloth laid on the floor by the reeds to denote the river.

How the T/Ds use props was a the discourse clear for both students and audience : the visual motives declared their reason to be, they had their own voice. In both practices, the practitioners – T/Ds and S/As - had themselves taken responsibility for collecting and arranging the props. As stated above, temporary props were discarded and the official ones used during tech-week. Once the practitioners transferred the performance into the theatre space during tech-dress run-throughs, a discourse of discovering a performance and making meaning became more prevalent and it was

¹ <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0669684/bio>.

closely associated with the sense of a community working together to create a production.

1.6. The Scenes



In this section I will examine the directing process of certain scenes of both plays and I will begin by discussing why I chose these scenes in particular. Firstly I wanted to chart their progress and development: how they started as deconstructed pieces of a given (written) act or scene and how, over time in rehearsal, they became a successful synthesis of various ideas with a common perspective in performance. Secondly these were scenes into which I was drawn, caught up by the invoked emotions both in myself and in the students. I was very surprised by the students' acting and creativity and questioned 'where do the students produce these feelings from?' How can an untrained student actor provoke and challenge the emotions of adults? Thirdly, I noted and recorded the T/Ds' approaches and ways of exploring these particular scenes, approaches which then became a directing model for scenes to come.

5.6.1.The Drowning Scene



Chrissia and Naz are on the front deck of the ship. They look happy.

Chrissia: At last, we are off.

Naz: Are you happy?

Chrissia: I don't like the dark heavy clouds in the sky.

Naz: It's raining.

Chrissia: The sea is unsettled.

Narrators: The waves become bigger and bigger and the ship starts tilting more and more.

Chrissia: (Loud voice) We are going to drown!

Naz: Don't worry.

Narrators: Chrissia sees a man on the ship's bridge

Chrissia: Help! Help!

Naz: He can't hear

Narrators: There are raging waves now. Naz and Chrissia cannot hold onto the deck.

Chrissia: Help! Help! He has to help us. He is looking at us. He sees us.

Naz: No he can neither see nor hear us in this stormy weather

Narrators: He turned away

Chrissia: He is not there. He's left us alone.

Naz: We have each other.

Narrators: The ship is tilting more and more. Chrissia and Naz cannot hold on to the ship or each other. They are apart now. Naz tries to reach Chrissia. Chrissia falls into the sea.

Naz: Chrissiaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

Narrators: He jumps with his suitcase into the large dark sea.

Blackout

Petros suggested that they had to 'explore' all the given images suggested by the playwright or 'alternatively' perhaps more potent images 'could be found'. He suggested that all the students come up on stage to "be involved in this scene and to create the feeling of the ship". Petros suggested that first they have to build a representation of the ship. He told students to use the school desks for this purpose. They put the desks parallel to the audience.

Petros commented: "Put them diagonally ... it gives more perspective ...". The students looked at him puzzled and confused. They could not see what he meant, so Petros stepped onto the stage area and put the desks diagonally himself, saying:

Like this, it's fine. Now everybody from the audience can see the perspective, like a 3D image.

He continued:

We have to find a way of doing this scene. We have to find a physical/body language. Your bodies need to be present in this scene more than any other. You will be on the desks. The desks now become a stage.

Naz asked:

What does 'physical/body language' mean?

Petros: The experience of being on a ship illegally.

Naz: But we've never been illegal.

Petros: Consciously not. But you have definitely done something without getting permission from an adult. Moreover, you have to show how your body language changes according to the change of the waves ... they start as waves, they become choppy and end up as raging waves ... Let's set the scene.

Petros said that the narrators needed to be at each side of the 'ship' and Naz and Chrissia knelt in the middle of the 'ship'. Students started rehearsing the scene saying their lines. It was a bit of a mess. Lines, movements, narrators, everything was all over the place. Petros stopped the rehearsal, commenting:

This needs to be coordinated ... to be synchronised...

He added

We need to do the movements. First, without your lines - listen to what the narrators say.

One could speculate that Petros did not want to plot the scene immediately and his expression of uncertainty was a way to gain more time before having to decide whether the students would be practising their lines or not while they were doing the movements. He said:

This is 'your ship' and you can create what you want.

Naz said:

I like the idea of being on the table.

Petros asked them:

So how do we set this up?

The playwright's directions were coming from the narrators' mouths and were clear: "a storm was coming", there were "raging waves ahead", and "the ship is tilting". Petros wanted the narrators, lines, students and movements to become synchronised. Petros asked the students to do a run-through without speaking their lines as he wanted to see how their bodies responded to what the narrators were saying. After this run-through Petros commented that he was not sure about their movements:

"It was too static when a storm is coming".

"But we do not know what to do" replied the four students in unison.

"I think I do" he said.

Petros indeed had something in mind. He immediately rose from his seat and went on stage. He stood in the middle of the 'ship' and he grabbed both students by their arms: one on his left and the other on his right. He told the narrators to begin again.

While the narrators spoke their lines, Petros held and moved the students in harmony with the action suggested by the narrators' words. Their wavy movements got larger and more intensive as the narration progressed. At the appropriate moment, when the 'raging waves' hit the ship, he separated the students and pushed them to each side of it. They had enacted a synchronised, 'rough sea' movement: panting, short of breath, they tilted as the ship was hit by the waves. Petros stopped and calmly said:

This is how the scene has to be.

He then left the stage area and reassumed the more traditional role of director, adding:

Let's have another run-through now.

The students ran through the scene again. You could tell that he was not happy. He decided to split the scene into images:

Ok, I think it will be better if we split the scene into images:

First image: Happy on the 'ship'.

Second image: Rain starts.

Third image: 'Ship' is titling.

Fourth image: Raging waves hit the 'ship'.

Fifth image: A man on the bridge/hope

Sixth image: Naz and Chrissia separated.

Seventh image: Chrissia disappeared from the deck.

Eighth image: Naz jumps into the sea.

In every image Petros encouraged them to 'feel' something different from the previous one. For instance, in image one, they should feel relieved they had escaped the slavery work, the body trafficker and were happy because now they were on their way to freedom. For the second image, Petros asked the students to change their body action when the rain starts:

Feel differently and show it with voice and body movement. When you (Chrissia) say 'I don't like the black clouds', give a glance at the clouds and change your position.

For image three he suggested that the students should follow the ship's tilting movement. For image four he recommended that students change their position, make more intense gestures accompanied by analogous facial expressions. They also needed to speak the script loudly. The fifth image, he said, "Should frame the whole thing". What he meant, and later explained to the students, was that this image would depict the cruelty of people and the teens' realisation that there are not many people around to help them. He wanted to illustrate the social and moral breakdown and dilemma. For image six, Petros asked them to be separated and to capture the chaotic, uncaring and sometimes dangerous world that set people apart. In the seventh and eighth images, despair and fear creep in, but true care and love also appear. Over a number of consecutive runs, the two desks (the 'ship') functioned like a curtain, opening and closing as the above 'images' were consecutively performed. At the end of the scene, the two desks were left with no-one on them. The desks had become a carriage with the two students on it, like commuters, while the stage in front of the desks became the sea on which the images would be performed in front of the audience.

Petros then needed sound effects. At this stage of the rehearsals no sound equipment was available, so Petros asked the students to create the sounds of a storm. He wanted to construct an atmosphere in which the students could build up the tension of the scene. He had all the students watch the scene and asked them to reflect on, and react, according to the narrators' utterances. The impression created was that of the chorus in Ancient Greek theatre, creating a strong focus on the actor-based story by the use of a mass physical presence. In a later rehearsal, closer to the performance date, this 'chorus' was accompanied by recorded music. The scene would start with natural 'wind' sounds created by the students, this time sitting at the side of the 'stage', and the inserted recorded music would augment the 'wind' sound constructed by them.

5.6.2. The Celebration Scene



Another Saturday and another rehearsal is taking place at School A. T/Ds and S/As have gathered at the usual rehearsal/function room on the top floor of the

secondary school. It is cold outside. Students have brought their costumes from the wardrobe/dressing room and get themselves ready for the rehearsal. Katerina and Sophia announce that they will rehearse the last party scene. The scene concerns the reconciliation of all the differences that have occurred during the play between all the parties. The directions state: "Everyone is on stage, happy and laughing". However, it soon became obvious that Katerina had a more energised entrance in mind:

The purpose of this entrance is to show society at play. There's a burst of energy coming from the end of the previous scene ... it's another whole-company scene.

By 'company scene'¹ Katerina meant that all the cast would be involved, as indeed they had been in three previous scenes: 'Court Scene', 'Tavern Scene', and "Opening Scene". She continued with what seemed to be a recurring motif throughout her practice - that of first asking the company how they were going to do the scene: "What interesting movement could we do?" and then answering the question herself, "It would be nice if everyone could do a bit of dancing to accompany the last song". Katerina subsequently showed the cast what she had in mind running onto the stage and adding, "All split out here and party". Students, watching Katerina gyrate on the rehearsal floor, laughed loudly to which Katerina responded, "That laugh is good." and then added "Let's just see what happens". The students then ran through the entrance, which was distinguished by the laugh of a student who had taken on board Katerina's previous encouragement. The majority of students then started laughing and it became a chaotic instead of a choreographed party scene. Students started talking loudly and Katerina became upset and spoke much louder in order to be heard by the students, "What you're doing is not a reconciliation party but a fighting party.", continuing:

¹ Can be translated as Group Scene

You are happy, you can laugh, you can talk to each other, but you have to bear in mind that the music ensemble will be playing the last song. You have to be prepared to sing the song and be prepared to say your lines as well.

This final scene demanded multi-tasking from all the participants: students had to party and sing, along with saying their lines and the music ensemble had to play the song and lower the music volume when the actors spoke their lines. She asked the students to go off and do the entrance again. She added "You should be conversing, laughing and walking cheerfully". She asked the students to explore "What level of focused partying happens?". The students looked puzzled and confused. She explained

What's it like if you have silent a conversation with body gestures?

Adding:

[It would] be nice if we could find a way to show that is meaningful to participate in, so you are not chaotic and a random mass of people.

A student commented:

So Miss, you don't want us to link? So we are having conversation with an imaginary person?

The students slowly gathered at the centre of the stage again. It seemed that the new instructions left them wondering what they should be doing for the party scene.

Katerina replied to the previous comment:

Maybe just for the moment work on separate activity and find the essential thread of party/feast behaviour. It gets chaotic if you don't know exactly what you are doing. Try to find some little action as if you're listening to the music ensemble.

The students entered the stage again. Their pace now was different as they had had some time to contemplate what Katerina had said, although perhaps not *enough* time as, when the scene was run, it seemed to me that they did not know what they were doing. No one seemed to pay any attention to the imaginary music ensemble. Katerina wanted them to have their music in their head, to work the scene as the music being heard. (The music ensemble was not there that day). It was Sophia who stopped the rehearsal now.

[The entrance] was better than before. It seemed to work for a while then the interaction became a little meaningless and didn't give the feeling of winning over silliness over the previous run-through. I missed the feeling that you were just coming out to celebrate a significant announcement: the end of the war.

Another student added:

Do you want us to be close together?

To which Sophia said no and concluded:

Keep exploring it. We should keep trying. It's a very interesting 'getting together' one you've all been waiting for.

The students left the stage. Sophia gave the signal to enter by clicking her fingers. This time students entered in a more serious way. It did not look like a party but it seemed that they were concentrating more and the imaginary conversation they were having was livelier and accompanied by gestures. Both T/Ds exclaimed that this was much better. Katerina now took the lead and said:

We think that a party scene can't exist without dance. We think that it would be nice if you dance, starting in pairs and then all together as a group.

Another round of laughter burst out. Phrases like "I don't dance", "It is ridiculous", "I will look funny", "I don't want to dance" hung in the air. There was a feeling of awkwardness. "And what shall we dance?" asked a student. Katerina replied:

You will dance the Antikristo¹ It matches the rhythm of the music. So you are in pairs in the beginning and then you come into a big circle and you all dance together.

The students started making fun of the instruction and started dancing, laughing and mimicking the dance. At this point the student playing the King said:

Stop, let's concentrate. Miss, you have to call out, you're the director.

This impromptu comment from a student is indicative of how students acknowledged their need for assistance, not just for the sake of the production but also to control their own behaviour. Neither Katerina nor Sophia made any comment and both continued as though nothing had been said.

There's got to be more exploration of the party scene and it is difficult to do on stilts (She meant standing like this; probably that was her comment on what students had previously called out). Go on searching for a way to break the convention of a party. Made your own party. I know that we need time to explore it instead of finding an instant solution.

Students listened without making any comment. The tone of Katerina's voice made clear that she was in charge. The fussing noises stopped and instantly the students walked to the sides of the stage to repeat the entrance for the party.

The cue for your entrance will be the clicking sound of my fingers. You need to be absolutely quiet in order to hear it. (Another indication that they had to be silent)

The silence spread throughout the room. She paused for a moment, clicking her fingers to test them. She wanted to see if they could remain focused and concentrated. After two seconds she flicked her fingers and the students started to appear from both sides of the stage, walking happily, with smiling faces and controlled gestures, with no

¹This is a pair dance with partners facing each other.

sound at all. They mimed that they were having a conversation. They had followed the instructions to the letter. Katerina said:

Well done. I will stop it here, because we need the music to continue the scene. I am glad that you got the feeling of this special party. It is special because although you're celebrating the reconciliation, it was not without casualties. It is a party but not to celebrate victory but life.

It was an insightful moment which revealed the huge advance they had made by working every Saturday on the text with the S/As in order to create a performance meaningful to everyone from S/As to members of the audience.

We'll work on it next time, including the music.

True to her word, Katerina did return to this scene the following Saturday. This time the music ensemble was not there. They would come later in the rehearsal schedule, but Katerina and Sophia brought the CD with music from the initial performance 52 years ago. The scene was first run through as it was rehearsed last time and then Sophia addressed the S/As:

Now we're going to try a simple dance step that Katerina will show you.

As she spoke Katerina demonstrated a shuffle of the feet:

Your head/mind is free but you must always keep your eyes on the scene. You can twist, you can do whatever you like but the purpose is not to draw attention to yourself but to give focus on what we said last time: it was life that won. Look at each other's eyes. The dance should relate to your character.

It would seem that Katerina and Sophia had conferred during the week on how to bring some structured action to the dance and to the scene. They then worked with the S/As on their entry. Following a noisy and enthusiastic entry by S/As, which neither T/Ds liked, they asked S/As to "All run on (stage) silently as part of your dance". After the scene was run through a couple of times Katerina - she was in charge now -

suggested that S/As start dancing as the accompanying music began. She continued to work on the scene despite a high level of chatter amongst the students and a couple of students chasing each other behind her back, much like primary children playing under the nose of their teacher. It is likely that both T/Ds consciously allowed this childlike quality of anarchic play in rehearsal as a way to allow the actors to have fun, to retain their creative spark and to avoid boredom as T/Ds believed that this would contribute to what S/As could achieve with the play. Simon Callow has echoed this thought, commenting that from an actor's point of view his preferred:

... director's conduct of rehearsal ... favour[s] ... anarchic high spirits, laughter and improvisation ... For me, contained anarchy is the most fruitful. Play should be at the heart of rehearsal as it should be at the heart of performance. So many of the best inventions and the truest impulses have grown out of mad horseplay (Callow, 1984:161).

There was at times, however, a fine line between creative play-making and time wasting; after reaching the limits of their tolerance and understanding, Katerina abruptly directed S/As to "shut up". However, she then immediately reclaimed the playful atmosphere of the room by laughingly saying, "I love you too" - a phrase that she would use constantly in an ironic way in order to reveal her irritation of unwanted behaviour by the students and then to recover the atmosphere in the room. The subsequent second run of the scene demonstrated this section in its early stages, still a little rough around the edges. The entrance was quiet with lots of experimental and improvisational gestures; in the dance there was too much 'wasted' movement and not enough focus on the feeling of a "Pyrrhic Victory". These were all the things that T/DAs asked for and only partially achieved. This may indeed reflect the time required to work in detail with a large group of actors.

This scene would be rehearsed often during subsequent weeks. When the music ensemble rehearsed the scene, actions within the scene needed to be embedded as now that the 'feeling' of the scene had been explained, more practical issues had to be sorted out - for example, the synchronisation between dramatic action and the music, led by the pace and rhythm of the latter.

5.7. Conclusion

On the surface, all T/Ds structured the rehearsals in a traditional manner with discussion and analysis followed by blocking, runs of the scenes and acts and technicalities around the rehearsal such as required props and lights. S/As felt free to express their mind from the early stages of rehearsal. In the same way as Brook deliberately abandoned "the first day ... speech" approach which he now sees as a "rotten way of starting", preferring instead a:

... rehearsal climate in which the actors feel free to produce everything they can bring to the play. That's why in the early stages of rehearsal everything is open and I impose nothing (Brook, 1988:3).

So too the T/Ds provoked and guided a democratic debate emerging from the given circumstances of the play. T/Ds asked S/As to respond to the play on the basis of style, plot meanings and political/social background. This was probably due, as has been mentioned before, to the unsettled situation in Greece at that time. Their approach is reminiscent of Italian director Giorgio Strehler's three boxes theory: examining the text from the three levels of *family*, *socio-historical forces* and *humanistic universal notions* (Hirst, 1991:32). What T/Ds tried to create was a collective understanding of the text, which then directly informed the production. Brecht defined collective theatre

work as a "pooling of knowledge" (in Pavis, 1998:63). Each rehearsal, especially in the first weeks and even until the middle of the rehearsal period, was spent in reading, questioning and debating the text, resulting in a shared knowledge of the play. However, one cannot underestimate the impact of the director's vision, personality and motivations on the rehearsals and the subsequent production. The first Saturday of both the rehearsal processes, for example, T/Ds set parameters within which debate with the S/As was encouraged. The T/Ds actively led and participated themselves.

As the rehearsal process progressed, many decisions had to be made very quickly. This perhaps is a reflection of the shortage of time due to the other obligations of both T/Ds and S/As. For the first half of the rehearsal period T/Ds worked each scene separately. They had not run-through the whole play, they were content to "simply ... watch and listen as the actors worked" (Cramphon, 1998:131). As the performance date approached they were trying to have run-throughs of the whole play. All T/Ds wanted to have a run-through as soon as possible. For example *Fairytale's* T/Ds Katerina and Sophia ran through the whole play even though the last scene, the Party Scene, had not been worked on extensively or in any detail. Similarly, *Suitcase's* T/Ds Petros and Maria ran the whole play without having worked on the opening scene or the last scene in detail, where all the S/As are on stage singing.

What T/Ds might have been aiming to achieve was a perception of a possible overall format for themselves and for each actor. T/Ds tried to have whole play run-throughs as soon as possible even with the scripts in hand. This approach differs from standard mainstream practice where a full run of the play is usually only begun towards the end of the rehearsal process when all the scenes have been blocked by the director and actors, thereby serving to *finalise* the play's form, rather than aiming to actively *originate* form, as was the case here. Early runs of the whole play helped both T/Ds and

S/As to see their gaps in practical needs as well; for instance, the extra props they might need to prepare for the next rehearsal. The approaches of the T/Ds were also different from standard mainstream theatre direction in another way. Although the pressure for a performance was present, there was still time to resist the need to 'see form fast'; in Benedetti's words, T/Ds initially had the ability to:

cope with the enormous pressure, frustration, and anxiety which accompanies any creative endeavour and which may tempt us to short circuit the creative process for ourselves and for others (Benedetti, 1985: 7).

This was not the case nearer the performance date. Stress, anxiety and nerves took over in both rehearsal processes. In *Fairytale's* case, during the final technical rehearsal Katerina fainted. It was the moment she tried to synchronise the music ensemble, the S/As' movements and the lights. You could tell that her nerves were on edge and she was speaking loudly, shouting in efforts to coordinate all the above elements. Suddenly she stood still, and then fell to the floor. I was behind her, watching her and thinking how stressed she seemed. The tape recorder was recording the whole process while at the same time I was taking notes. I saw her falling and before I could do anything to help, I heard the thud of her body on the floor. I ran towards her and some of the students jumped off the stage, anxious to help her. She was conscious but pale. She had fallen to the floor but luckily some seats had broken her fall; she did not seem to have hurt herself.

Are you Ok? I asked

I am fine, she replied

I need some water, Katerina said.

Someone bring some water here, I shout.

I helped her to a seat. She was still pale and breathing quickly. She drank the water and her breathing seemed to settle. She was still pale. I wanted to ask her if it was the play or something else that was bothering her. She said:

I am feeling better now. Let's move on.

Maybe it is better to remain seated for a bit longer, suggested Sophia (the other T/D)

No, I am feeling much better...

Katerina stood up; her face was still pale and I was really worried. The students seemed to be worried as well. They had gathered in small groups and were talking in low voices. I wanted to find out what they were talking about, so I decided to move towards the groups who were on the stage. I climbed on the stage and walked around discretely. I heard them discussing Katerina's fainting episode. They talked in low voices, almost whispering, like sharing secrets. They seemed worried, maybe feeling responsible for Katerina's condition. Some of the students retreated to the wings, perhaps feeling safer to talk there about what had happened. After 5-10 minutes and while the private conversations were still going on, Katerina felt much better. She called the students to the centre of the stage to talk to them. There was a peculiar silence all around: the silence of guilt or the unwillingness to take responsibility, if any. She spoke in a low, calm voice:

I am really sorry for the episode. It had nothing to do with you. I have so many things on my mind. It is not just the production. It's the school, I am a married woman and mother (she smiled) and of course the production. I know that you, personally, have dedicated so much of your time to this production, I could not ask for much more. I hope not to make you feel bad. It is not you. I need some rest after we finish.

Rehearsal notes, May 2010

No one responded to or commented on what she had said. They all stared at her with this questioning look, perhaps wondering if she was telling the truth or not.

Katerina continued:

We do not have much time in front of us. We have to work a little harder than usual, but without stress (she pointed to herself and laughed). Let's go back to our position and start the rehearsal from the beginning. I want to say to all of you that you are doing a great job. (ibid)

The students started clapping and laughing. I could see them become more relaxed and relieved, and all of them took their positions and the rehearsal continued as if nothing had happened.

Similarly, in the *Suitcase* rehearsal process, Petros left the rehearsal room and he did not come again until the following Saturday. He left the room just before the run-through of the scene they were working on. It was a crucial moment. The date of the performance was close and Petros was stressed. I could tell that from the increasingly intense manner in which he directed. He was abrupt to the students, and then he exploded. I thought he wanted to frighten the students by saying 'I am leaving. Do it on your own.' Then he grabbed his keys and his bag from the table and started walking towards the exit and left. We were all looking towards the exit, almost smiling, but he never came back. Students started looking at each other and whispering, saying such things as 'what happened' and 'he will back in a moment. The minutes passed and a student decided to go outside and check if Petros was still there having a cigarette. The student returned, saying:

He is not there. He's really gone.

There was deadly silence in the rehearsal room. Students started gathering in small groups. "What are we going to do now?" said some. "We are in trouble." said another. Maria, the other T/D said:

Let's do the scene again.

She did not make any comment on Petros' departure, nor did she respond to students' questions about Petros' behaviour. She probably thought it would be better to continue the process as if nothing had happened and to concentrate on the job at hand. I have never discovered if the incident I'm describing was resolved on Monday, the next school day. The following Saturday the rehearsal took place as though the incident had never happened. Both of these potentially disturbing incidents seemed to make the S/As work in a stronger, collective manner.

5.8. Meta-Conclusion

The T/Ds' strategy of delaying decision making whilst encouraging S/As to actively discuss and debate the text, to continually question and explore the blocking and then to 'play' with the technical resources of the theatre did seem to extend elements of discovery throughout the entire rehearsal period. The psychologist Stephen Aaron compares the opening phase of a rehearsal as:

... reviving pleasurable memories from the actor's own childhood when s/he could joyfully and fearlessly play in front of mother (Aaron, 1992:50).

Aaron contrasts this phase with the middle and final phases of rehearsal where the director gradually pulls further away from the actor as staging is set and the director interrupts less. All T/Ds seemed to give actors guiding structures within which they could 'play' right up until opening night. Petros, for instance, gave S/As the opportunity

to work on the last scene of the play: S/As wanted more time to work on the song they had chosen for the final scene, they wanted to work towards perfection. In this respect, the analogy of T/Ds as parents facilitating the child-like play of the S/As is most apt; and not just for the aforementioned reason but also because the S/As were of an age when they had not long left childhood themselves. The notion of director as parent is highlighted by Letzler Cole as one of many "provisional metaphors" that have been "substantiated by theatre practitioners themselves" (Cole, 1992:49-50. It is the "maternal gaze [...] the mutual gaze of mother and infant" that Letzler Cole sees as "... most promising though insufficient to encompass the whole of the director-actor experience". (*ibid*)

Daniel Stern an experimental psychiatrist "... whose films of infants in interaction with their mothers have profoundly affected the director Robert Wilson" comments that "mother and children play all sorts of exaggerated verbal-visual games" (in Aaron, 1992:229). In this respect, Katerina, from *Fairytale* acted as a mother-like model at various times. Specifically, she would bring and take students back home because they did not have transport to get to and from rehearsals. In another case she spoke to a student's father because he thought that what his daughter was doing was a waste of time. Similarly, Petros fostered a nurturing environment in the rehearsal room. He would stand still listening to S/As' suggestions or alternatively, playfully laugh while sitting on the desk conversing with students on everyday matters. He would allow S/As to chase each other behind his back, while pretending not to notice. He would also allow a certain noise level and permit jokes and repartee between S/As in ways which allowed them to be "... as relaxed as possible in rehearsal" and created a "... work atmosphere in which you feel anyone can say what they think" (in Stewart 1996).

These approaches of all four T/Ds ensured an atmosphere of trust, playfulness, pleasure and fun, all of which permitted a certain child-like quality of anarchic play in the rehearsal room. In the actor Simon Callow's words "... an amniotic fluid in which creativity can flourish". (Callow, 1984:174). For Benedetti the "...most common failing of directors [is] that they impede rather than liberate the energies of their fellow artists." (Benedetti, 1985:4). In his survey of thirty directors and their work processes in the USA he found certain recurrent responses that included "...sharing, collaboration, commitment, creative energy and flow [that] express a kind of energy that is uninhibited and unselfish" (*ibid*). According to Benedetti, what the director seeks in the rehearsal hall is a "creative state...in which the play will grow". This 'creative state' will reflect the director's own "mood" and implies a spirit of enthusiasm and almost child-like abandon" and therefore to be "effective" the director tends to encourage the "blend of child and adult necessary to artists" (Benedetti, 1985:7).

All T/Ds' approaches in rehearsal would often seem to embody this blend of child and adult, a manner which would allow play while defining the boundaries. An integral part of fostering this sense was T/Ds' propensity to allow S/As to make mistakes without overly criticising them. This ability in a director to allow actors to make mistakes as they search for the right option seems to be important in establishing a collaborative and democratic atmosphere in the rehearsal room. Director Michael Leibert has commented that "... actors need to make mistakes on their own, or their own understanding would never be truthful" (in Benedetti, 1985:6).

Additionally, Simon Callow believes that the difficult challenge for an actor is to find this "child-self [which] ... is behind all great acting" (Callow, 1984:175). This is what he feels is the whole point of rehearsal although he thinks it is "hard for some directors, as for some parents ... to give the actor-child his freedom and independence".

According to Callow the guiding boundaries of rehearsal are the questions the director "must ask", and the praise and criticism he must give to aid the actor in "crystallising [and] elucidating" their character (Callow, 1984:175).

The issue of independence, mentioned by Callow, was not always the case for S/As. There were innumerable instances, especially at the beginning of the rehearsal process when a new scene was being rehearsed, where S/As would stand immobile in the centre of the scene holding their scripts in their hands, waiting for the T/D to make the first move. They explicitly would state, "I do not know what to do" and whatever the explanations the T/D would give to them, they would remain still. They wanted their 'parent' to take them by the hand and guide them in their first step. At this stage the T/D would step onto the stage and explicitly show positions and even gestures to S/As. In this case someone could tell that T/Ds gave extremely precise instructions and the visual and aural blocking was autocratic. A student's statement after they were trying out a scene reflects this approach, "Let's wait for his response." (Demetra from rehearsals 2010). All T/Ds would give very specific directions on where to move, how to move and what inflection to give certain lines that risked "emasculating the actor" (Pavis, 1998; 103). Such line-readings have traditionally been regarded as restricting and inhibiting for the actor. However, Pavis points out that Georgio Strehler:

... shows the actor what is expected ... it is always a performance in itself, [and] an invitation to go beyond imitation, and a blessing for the actor (Pavis, 1998: 103).

In an analogous statement, Simon Callow says that "the child imitates his mother in order to understand her, to be able to deal with her, to take away some of her magic." (Callow, 1984:178). This reflects exactly what was going on in both rehearsal rooms. S/As wanted someone else to take them to this 'magic' place and then from

there on they could continue the exploration. They wanted someone to make the decision for them to begin with. S/As wanted a decisive director.

In mainstream theatre there are cases where actors have complained about directors' lack of decisiveness. Actor Anthony Sher, during the rehearsal of *Richard III*, laments that director Bill Alexander does not 'decide' when he should "between the different solutions to the problems in these scenes [but] sits silently, looking miserable ... and continues to sit obstinately on the fence, so it's left unresolved" (1985:211). It is perhaps this early autocracy emanating from all T/Ds that gave S/As confidence in the T/Ds' processes, resulting in a balance between their own decision-making with the benefit of an outside, critical, observing eye.

If as Aaron argues the "director functions as the actor's observing ego" during rehearsal, then it is critical that the actor has faith in the director to be a "reliable mirror", one who is able to see and evaluate what the actor can't see - the overall stage picture (Aaron, 1986: 114&44). Lindy Davies defines the director's role as being responsible for such an overall 'aesthetic', something that the individual actor does not always necessarily see, because they are inside a scene rather than outside it, looking at it. For this reason, after *Fairytale* rehearsals, the S/As would always sit at the edge of the scene in order to get feedback both from Katerina and Sophia. Simon Callow supports Davies' view, commenting that:

... narrative, meaning and style must be insisted on by someone who is not you [but by the director] ... It's almost impossible for [an actor], thrashing around in the filthy waters of subconscious, to maintain an overview of the play ... The director has to develop an acute sense of the graph of [actor's] performance ... Because it's going on inside [the actor], [the actor] can be cruelly deceived by what [the actor's] feeling as opposed to what [the actor] is doing (Callow, 1984,174-175).

I remember in one of the *Suitcase* rehearsal where Petros and the protagonist

S/A had an immense argument about a moment in the final scene:

The ensemble works on the last scene of the play. It is the "Recognition Scene" where Naz meets his brother at a car wash. After they recognised each other they sat down and they talk about their family back home; they talked about their expectations and if they met them: in other words, if the journey was worth it. They read the card sent by Naz's brother before Naz started his journey. In the card there was the phrase "I made it". This is the point that triggered the discussion that follows:

Petros: This phrase "I made it", does it mean a satisfaction? What do you think? Has he made it?

Eleni: This is what he wanted to write to his parents.

Petros: Ok, this is what he says to his parents, but how does he feel?

Demetra: Disappointment?

Petros: He made nothing ... What he made was nothing ... he crossed the world from one side to the other, to end up washing people's cars ... people do not like him ... people do not smile back, people that are human like him - as you pointed out earlier. So this line "I made it" has to be said in a way that the audience should and would understand that he doesn't mean it. It is not a triumph when he says "I made it".

Naz: But he is lying...

Eleni and Demetra: He is...He hasn't been meaning to reach London ... his aim was to improve his way of life ...

Petros: Don't you think that things were very different from what he expected them to be?

Naz: This card, this is mediocre card ... It is not like the first one that was completely full of lies ... this one is an 'in between' card

Petros: Just a minute ... Why did you argue with your brother then?

Naz: Because he lied ...

Petros: Ok, so what you've been experiencing until now is what he has already experienced?

Naz: Yes.

Petros: So, what have you achieved? Your brother neither became a doctor nor lives in a paradise ... when you write to your parents "I made it" ... the aim is to reassure them that everything is going well ... But what do you really believe?

Naz: ... that I have made nothing?

Petros: I think so, yes

Naz: I have a different opinion. It is not so rubbish here ... not all the people smile back at him, but there are a few that do ...

Petros turns and looks at a different student ... Maybe he is seeking approval or to hear something different?

Demetra: I think he is disappointed, he didn't find the things he expected to but he also doesn't want to worry his parents ...

Naz: He believes what he says because he needs an 'air' of optimism as well ... he wants something to keep him going ...

Eleni: He feels guilty about his parents ... he doesn't want that...

Petros: We have to decide a concrete result ...

Demetra :... a performing style ...

Petros: My opinion is that in this last scene there is bitterness, disappointment, uselessness ... It is not enough for them; they (the brothers) are still alive ... and I don't personally believe that when someone emigrates to another country this is what he has in his mind: just to stay alive ... He emigrated expecting a brighter future, a better life, anticipating the 'promised land'. But what he found instead was not what he was looking for. My opinion is that the last part has to be 'bitter' and 'cramped'.

Demetra: I would agree with that ...

Naz: I disagree ... I am trying to find a more optimistic 'touch' to what is happening to him ... Yes it is rubbish here and miserable ... but not so miserable ...it doesn't say "nobody smiles back at you" ... It says 'there are few that smile back to you'

Petros: Ok, let's stop here ... let's do the scene ... In order to warm up yourselves start from scene 7.

Petros talking to me: (Student's real name) has not got the whole perspective of the play ... That is my responsibility...

(From transcription of rehearsals, 30 March 2010)

Petros' last words echoed what the English director Declan Donellan has expressed:

An actor can't say to me, "I don't see how this fits in so I won't do it" because he can't see my overall concept (in Cook, 1983:92-93).

The recognition moment



There were moments during the rehearsal period when I would overhear uncomplimentary comments from S/As about T/Ds. I remember during one rehearsal when, after an argument between Katerina and some of the students about not learning their lines, students said things like "strict", "not understanding", "she just cares about the play", "we have so many things to do". On the other hand, they froze when Katerina had the fainting episode and they started to blame themselves. Similarly, in the *Suitcase* incident when Petros left the rehearsal room, S/As wondered whether they could achieve anything without the director. It seems that S/As need T/Ds' presence and guiding boundaries to begin or to continue a process. This kind of relationship with T/Ds is in Foucault's analysis of power: "... less of a face-to-face confrontation which paralyses both sides than a permanent provocation" (in Wallis, 1984:428). To what extent is he 'director' and how much 'teacher' for the students? The two roles are

overlaid and place student expectations on him and govern the ways in which they respond to and regard him.

The power relationship between T/Ds and S/As was frequently provoked and interchanged by the "recalcitrance of the will" of the director and the "intransigence" of S/As' search for "freedom" to make their own choices in rehearsal (in Wallis, 1984:428). This authoritarian relationship arises also from the fact that Petros, as well as Katerina, at some point during the rehearsal period clearly stated that, "We take the blame for any mistakes on your part during the performance." (Petros and Katerina from my rehearsal notes). What they would attempt is to keep S/As within boundaries, to sustain discipline because:

Discipline is freedom. Anything else, like, 'I do what I want', is simply promiscuous¹. (Lefteris Voyiatzis, interview, 08/04/12)

That is, while the ensemble prior to rehearsal may be organised on democratic lines, decisions taken within rehearsal may not necessarily be democratic, or not in accordance with the participants' will. Declan Donellan expresses a similar view stating that the:

... theatre doesn't work without someone being in overall charge, giving a sense of an overall whole. It becomes obvious in the productions which have no overall concept and no sense of the actors all working together (in Cook, 1987: 92-93).

This statement echoes Katerina's words when, in almost every rehearsal, she insisted "You are a team, work as a team ... You are individuals but on the stage you have to lose your individuality, you have to listen to other people's lines and look in

¹*Η πειθαρχία είναι ελευθερία. Το άλλο, το κάνω ό,τι θέλω, είναι απλώς ασυδοσία.*
http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w_articles_civ_2_08/04/2012_478257.

their eyes." (Katerina, from my fieldnotes). Similarly, Sophia would say: "Look at your co-player. Talk to him/her directly ... spit the words to him/her not to the air". (Sophia, from my fieldnotes). When I was in drama school, my teacher Maya Lymberopoulou, used to say that theatre is like football: it involves team work, and as in a football team there is a leader and in theatre the director leads the team.

It is worth mentioning here a personal experience that made me wonder if I was doing the right thing; there were moments during the rehearsal period where - in my opinion - the power of the director dominated the room. Students would work as puppets in an almost abusive way. I do not mean that students were physically or psychologically abused but rather intellectually coerced as they were forced to follow the director's will. According to Mark Fortier, to:

... struggle for a more humane more democratic process in theatre production is to search for an unsustainable ideal ... as what seemed democratic in one situation from one point of view may not seem so in another situation or to other viewpoints ... all that can happen is an endless retooling that is never perfected (Fortier, 1997:9).

In addition to having the time to allow the director and actors to genuinely explore the text in rehearsal, the process of democracy in rehearsal is also facilitated by a group that is relatively stable. In Stephen Sewell's words a group's 'commonality of purpose' can only be achieved through a working knowledge ... and "trust" of each other, gained over time; a group who will subsequently not be threatened by debate, but allow it (in Ridgman, 1983:1080). In the case of the two schools in which my fieldwork was conducted, the students and teachers had known each other for years. The two ensembles developed a structure which facilitated exploration because they knew each other, knew how they acted and behaved. James Waites attributed the success of two Shakespeare productions directed by Rex Cramphon to:

The advantage of having a group familiar with each other's ways ... a spirit of creative unity was in the air, and many of the best ideas come, as if out of nowhere (Waites, 1987:188).

This was reflected when students unanimously agreed on the imagery of the final scene of the play in which, making a 'wall' with their bodies, they moved towards the audience, singing "Sweet Dreams" by the Eurhythmics. This idea was created without any kind of discussion. It just occurred, a magical moment of the theatre created by a group of people after rehearsing in the same room for weeks. For Simon Callow this is normal after:

... weeks go by that the initially disparate group of people thrown together to put the play on become close ... a ... family ... trusting and therefore free to be rough with each other ... to put ourselves on the line (Callow, 1984:177).

All T/Ds worked really hard to sustain the team work and the family sense between the S/As. S/As followed:

... the guidelines from the director which gradually are lost. A give and take is taking place which requires maturity from both sides¹ (Lefteris Voyiatzis, interview, 22/02/2009).

The participants had the chance to talk and even sometimes to work on the play during week days and during school hours, when there was a gap between two lessons and never during school lesson hours, a fact which was made crystal clear when Petros took the microphone, just before the opening night:

I would like to make clear that students haven't missed a single minute from their in-school hours in order to put on this performance. What you will be watching in a few minutes is the fruit of students' spare time, working during weekends when their fellow students would be doing other things. And for that reason only, they deserve your applause regardless of whether you like the performance or not. Enjoy the performance.

(Opening night statement from Petros, from my fieldnotes).

¹Υπάρχει η κατεύθυνση που μπορεί να έχω από τον σκηνοθέτη αλλά σιγά σιγά χάνεται. Γίνεται ένα πάρε-δώσε που απαιτεί ωριμότητα.

CHAPTER 6: Feeling the Right Impulse

6.1. Introduction: Making, Changing and Being Changed

The work on acts and scenes, those processes that got called ‘discovering’ or ‘making meaning’, was intimately connected to broad discourses, such as of the school community, school theatre community, local authority, parents and colleagues, to buildings - as this thesis has examined. This chapter argues that these struggles were grounded in embodied states.

Practitioners, both T/Ds and S/As, discovered meanings in the texts and built up characters’ traits and motivations in order to construct their performances. These meanings were not merely discursive tropes but also served as physical experiences. As Zarrilli stated, "A practice is not a discourse, but implicit in any practice are one or more discourses and perhaps paradigms through which the experience of practice might be reflected upon and possibly explained" (Zarrilli, 1985:5). The point here is that labelling of practices and experiences comes after the fact. Something was felt that then enabled a practitioner to say "Why are you calling me that?" or "I’m really going to cry". In Maxwell's (2003) terms, this is where the discursive account is in fact preceded and grounded by the affective dimension of performances.

Participants' discussion of their performance was grounded in real sensations. The experience of school theatre T/Ds, and in fact this account of the two rehearsal processes, cannot rest completely on an analysis of a set of discursive formations; we must also look at the experiential evidence. Michael Jackson offers an important cautionary note: "... the lived subject must not be dissolved into discourse" (Jackson, 1989:1). It is for this reason that, once more, an ethnographic approach is so

fundamental. Ethnography not only advocates the research of working practices on the social agents' own terms - using practitioners' definitions and categorisations of what they do and say – it also recognises that the frameworks within which these agents understand the world, are embodied by the agents. When I study T/Ds' and S/As' interpretations of playscripts, an ethnographic approach addresses both what is said in the moment and also the affective states¹ that precede discourse.

During rehearsals, discussions around discovering meaning and building characters, and of constructing a performance, would often slip into what 'felt right' or 'good'. I observed an instinctive sense of 'knowing' amongst practitioners, when they 'got it' – when they had discovered the meaning or had moved in the right way.

This chapter will look at the affective dimension of the rehearsal work: it will investigate what is experienced by the practitioners, what is involved in feeling the 'right' feeling, how these feelings are produced and how they change the participants' aesthetics and the way they perceive phenomena within the society they live in (Fischer-Lichte E, 2008).

6.2. A Call to 'Feel Right'

In this section moments in rehearsal will be explored where both T/D and S/A practitioners found the 'right' way to play scenes and this discovery was identified as a 'feeling right' thing. These moments were not so easily produced: the existence of 'right' or 'good' feelings also implies the existence of 'wrong' feelings, and a discussion of one invariably includes a discussion of the other.

Consider the following account from my rehearsal notes for Fairytale:

¹ Mood or emotions.

During a rehearsal of Act Six of 'Fairytale Without A Name', the student playing Poormother enters the scene where the student playing the Teacher is waiting for her:

Poormother: *Ah ... You're here?*

Teacher: *You did not expect to see me?*

Poormother: *No ... Yes ... I don't know.*

Teacher: *You will never learn to say what you think.*

Poormother: *Leave me alone.*

T/D interrupts the scene saying to Poormother "I can't see the link ... I can't see your body language connecting to your thought process." She is referring to the delivery of the lines: "No ... Yes ... I don't know". She needed to see, physically, what was going on inside student/Poormother during those lines. She needed to see - visually, corporeally - the link between student/Poormother's two opposing thoughts. She said "Move your body at least and thoughts might follow ... We need to see what makes you unstable ... you do not give a straight answer. We hear that ... but we have to see that as well, visually".

Here was a case where the student understood exactly what had to happen; she had discovered the psychological link for *Poormother's* conflicting lines, empathised with her character but the link that she felt had to be more physically manifested so that the T/D and, by extension the audience, could feel it as well.

All T/Ds very explicitly urged S/As to 'feel' things within themselves. Yet these directions were not necessarily productive for S/As, either because they would say "I don't know what to do" or they did not have the 'right' tools or techniques to do what they were asked to do. During rehearsals for *Fairytale*, the T/D introduced a technique to help S/As to get the right feeling to "make the lines their own" (Sophia, from the rehearsals, January 2010) she asked students to get onto the floor where she demonstrated an acting exercise involving spitting each line of dialogue to one another, "until the impulse seems right" she said. For instance, the T/D asked S/As to stand face to face and urged them to say their lines till they "felt something was happening ... anything". Each student stood opposite the other; their first reaction was to laugh. Everybody expected that the T/D would shout at the practising students. On the

contrary, she said 'Now, something is happening'. Everyone looked surprised. She continued "The laughter you have produced" (She meant that now an interaction has begun between them. And then she said "... Continue the 'spitting' till you feel that your characters are saying the lines". They seemed to understand what she meant. She explained to the S/As that they were 'resolving reactions into lines', they were feeling the right impulse to respond to the previous line of dialogue. At that moment they felt it and we, the spectators, would feel it too.

However, the above exercise was not always used. I observed fifteen rehearsals and the T/D introduced it in one of the first I saw. The S/As took it up for as long as it lasted but after that, it was rarely if ever used and scarcely referred to again. It was clear from my observation that the S/As were frustrated by the T/Ds' attempts to have them react emotionally, impulsively. The T/D spent a long time explaining the exercise, but when the students attempted it in practice, they stammered over their lines and forgot whose line was whose. Sometimes the T/D interrupted to remind them of their lines by standing between them like a referee at a ping pong match; she also told them when to move to the following line. Rather than waiting for the S/As to feel 'right' in responding to the spoken line, the T/D simply directed. She had wanted this exercise to be a model for the rest of the S/As. However, the practising S/As were visibly confused by it instead as they were unsure of what exactly they were supposed to feel.

Similarly, during *Suitcase* rehearsals, Petros would urge students, to 'stand the playscript, up' , to transfer it onto the signed stage area, After the 'table reading' to see what 'they have understood'. It was clear that he wanted to see the embodiment of the S/As' understanding. He wanted to see this understanding through their bodily presence and movements. However, throughout rehearsals, despite Petros's regular reminders, S/As never did seem entirely comfortable when they 'stood it up'. They would

frequently say 'I don't know what to do' or 'Show me' and immediately Petros would climb on the stage in order to demonstrate what he meant.

For Cole, these types of exercises constitute "the seeming false starts and important wrong paths" of rehearsals (Cole, 2001:xiii). Yet among these 'false starts' and 'wrong paths', it is still unclear to S/As what constitutes 'feeling right' and 'feeling wrong'.

6.3. Accessing Original Impulses

In the last few pages of this section both the *Fairytale's* and *Suitcase's* S/As' discovery of their characters' subtext has been mentioned. The idea of Petros walking through a scene to see what the actors 'find' has been cited, and Katerina's exercise from *Fairytale* (using one actor's delivery to force another's) has been inscribed/ mentioned too. All these practices reflect a conceptualisation of the actor as a form of potential energy that simply requires a sudden surge of power ('feeling') to transform. This push of energy and the impulse to transformation are generated and approved by T/Ds.

This transformation is a familiar metaphor in writings on professional theatre rehearsals. Cole describes the actor as needing a "jumper cable to jolt his/her awareness of sub-textual possibilities" (Cole, 1995:21), and Goorney writes how the actor might use specific ideas to "spark his own inventiveness" (Goorney, 1966:103). This jolting and sparking is located deep within the actor's body. *Fairytale's* T/Ds expected the exercise to locate impulses deep inside S/As; *Suitcase's* T/Ds expected the 'standing up scene' to generate deep intuitive practice in S/As. Again, this is common in rehearsal literature: Blau writes of a rehearsal process where the actors experimented with particular actions that came "unpredictably (and absurdly) from the lower depths"

(Blau:1963:126) and Brook warns against "the dangers of clogging original impulses that [might] obstruct the flow of energy that comes from deep within (Brook, 1988:22).

Furthermore, the conceptualisation of the rehearsal spaces directly mirrored particular ideas of both T/Ds and S/As. In order to access or generate these 'right' moments, T/Ds created appropriate rehearsal conditions: safe, carefully circumscribed spaces where S/As 'impulses' and 'intuition' could be accessed. In the case of *Fairytale*, the rehearsal space was the school building, safe in that it was locked, because rehearsals took place on Saturday, and with the rehearsal room on the top floor of the building which could only be accessed by a lift. This gave rehearsals a sense of otherworldliness which T/Ds hoped might enable S/As to forget their school-day personalities and inhabit the characters of their respective plays. In the case of *Suitcase*, the rehearsal building was also the school building, also locked and with the rehearsal room situated in the 2-level basement, accessed only by stairs. Inside the room, careful attention has been given to who might be present at any moment. For instance, while I had been given permission to attend rehearsals by the T/Ds, the Headteachers of both schools and from the Greek Pedagogical Institute, I had not spoken to the S/As collectively about my role there. In both cases, the T/Ds firstly introduced me to the S/As and then they asked me to address the S/As about my work. They wanted to know exactly what my interest in their practice was, what I was writing and most importantly what I was recording. Subsequently I was careful to speak to everyone at the first meeting in order to avoid any kind of awkwardness and insecurity on their part about my presence. As Cole writes,

To observe directors and actors in rehearsal is clearly a delicate undertaking. It can be perceived as an intrusion upon, and even a repression of the condition necessary to rehearse /for rehearsal (risk-taking, spontaneity, intimacy) (Cole, 1995:3).

In Cole's observation, there was a distinct correlation between the safety of the rehearsal room and the risky discovery of character and self. In *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*, it became clear that these private rehearsal spaces created conditions where S/As could take risks by accessing their own 'space of creativity' in order to discover and create their characters. There was also a safe space for T/Ds too. There were moments when T/Ds took risks or were made vulnerable: their ideas, demonstrations, availability and willingness to work were often taken for granted. They had their own obstacles to overcome, something that none of the S/As seemed to have considered. For instance, in one rehearsal *Suitcase's* T/D became upset and cried. On another occasion the same T/D had to leave the rehearsal room because of his anger; *Fairytale's* T/D fainted: all these moments left T/Ds feelings exposed.

Many years ago, something happened that made me aware of the director's role as creator. I was acting in a very delicate and sensitive play composed from a montage of literary texts. The title of the play was "Into the stream of their lives". At some point, when the director instructed one of the actors, the director's eyes filled with tears. It was an eureka moment for me: the director had been so moved by his own ideas and by what he had in his mind that it had triggered an emotional response. He put his own feelings into the process. Until then, directors seemed to me to be people who simply executed the intentions, instructions and guidelines of the playwright. In that moment, I realised that a play is an expressive process for a director too. When I recall this scene I am given to believe that, subconsciously, this incident might have been the motivation behind my subsequent research. Directors are not just the logisticians of the play. They are more than that: they are creators and interpreters of their own ideas, just like any other artist. In the same way that a painter might express his own perception of a

specific 'nature', likewise a Director always colours his work with his own perception of the human nature and guides his actors to reflect it

The T/Ds I observed for my research had their own conceptions about how their plays would be enacted and, as they stated repeatedly, were "to take the blame for anything going in the wrong direction". Another factor that made T/Ds and S/As more willing to take risks in their practices was the familiarity between them. T/Ds and S/As had known each other for at least a year while S/As had known each other for many years as they had been in the same school since they were children.

Ultimately, this particular relationship between T/Ds and S/As was associated with experiences that felt pre-lingual based in their own mode of communication formed during the weeks of working together. This is why rehearsal work dissolved into what felt 'right' or 'good': all participants in this process could feel the 'right' and the 'good' as soon as they experienced any effect at the level of embodiment.

For Zarrilli, the directions provided by my T/Ds, to find subtext, for example, would constitute moments where the S/As' minds are effaced "in favour of the body-of-impulses". This, Zarrilli argues, simply re-inscribes Cartesian dualism "in the form of an overly simplistic and monolithic subjectivity often described as the actors' presence, or as an organic or natural state of being" (Zarrilli, 1995:15); every participant, it could be said, was at the same time him - a person and *an actor* . All T/Ds' directions were, if not explicitly then at least implicitly, tied to ideas of the natural body and releasing natural responses. If they simply had to be natural, one may ask why participants only felt 'right' *some* of the time. Another area to consider is what was happening when one party felt right and other did not. Finally, the issue of what feels right and by what authority also needs to be considered.

6.4. Towards the "Meaning" of Performance

Formalist analysis only examines the paraphernalia of the performance: costume, lines, music and setting. These parameters are not enough to enable the researcher to make distinctions between scenes or moments that felt 'right' or 'good' and those that are something else. We cannot develop a full appraisal of a performance's features if these are not considered in their explicit socio-cultural, historical and institutional contexts. In this respect the *Fairytale's* 'impulse work' and *Suitcase's* 'discovering character' paradigms need to be explored not in a "semiotic vacuum" (Maxwell, 2003:181) but should be considered in terms of an explicit socio-cultural project undertaken in the presence of an interpretive community (Weber 1987) where the practitioners made sense of their work in particular ways. McAuley is interested in this shift. She states:

I prefer to see the theatrical event as a dynamic process of communication in which the spectators are virtually implicated, one that forms part of a series of interconnected processes of socially situated signification and communication, for theatre exists within a culture that it helps to construct, and it is the product of a specific work process (McAuley, 1999:7).

Similarly, Shevtsova suggests that there needs to be:

... a reformulation of signs, for example, via a concept of social semiotics which holds that social signs are made by someone to someone in an exchange of meaning in concrete situations allowing the creation of meaning (Shevtsova, 1989a:32).

This shift from a more formalist semiotics towards a social semiotics is Geertz's project in his essay, "Art as a Cultural System". He specifically critiques the attempts of creating:

... a technical language capable of representing the internal relations of myths, poems, dances or melodies in abstract, transposable terms (Geertz, 1983:95).

In addition, he argues that, "exposing the structure of a work of art and accounting for its impact are not the same thing" (*ibid*:118). Instead, he turns to what he calls "an ethnography of the vehicles of meaning" (*ibid*) through which he investigates a number of cultural words, including the art that comes out of, or, rather, is part of, those words, and examines how this art is made to mean things in these communities. He argues:

It is after all, not just the statues, paintings or poems [or performances]¹ that we have to do with but the factors that cause these things to seem important - that is, affected with import - to those who make or possess them, and these are as various as life itself (*ibid*:119).

Similarly, Maxwell argues that an analysis of performances can be useful to the extent that, for social agents or an interpretive community "meaning, or worth, will be ascribed to particular, identifiable [performance] features" (Maxwell, 2003:181). In this way, it is possible to tease out characteristics of the two rehearsal exercises and associated scene work - the *Suitcase's* development of character and *Fairytale's* impulse work - that were meaningful for the practitioners. This will lead the investigation closer to determining the grounds on which claims to 'feeling right' are made.

6.5. Interpreting Performance Features.

This section offers a brief performance appraisal of firstly, *Suitcase's* S/As' physical interpretation of their understanding of the characters and, secondly, *Fairytale's* exchange following the impulse work. I specifically address the details that

¹ Added by the researcher as I believe performance is a form of art as painting, poems

the practitioners understood as being 'good', 'right' or 'wrong'. The following is an example of a double reading of a scene:

Recognition Scene: Last Act of Suitcase. The two brothers are about to see each other after many years.

Naz enters the stage carrying his suitcase. His pace is slow. He explores the space. He looks towards the edge of the stage where his brother is standing. He looks all around trying to figure out where he is. *Naz* is standing upstage centre. Both actors pretend that they do not see each other. They look in opposite directions and there is a prolonged silence. *Naz* looks up first, flicks his head, eyes darting around the space, and begins speaking:

Naz: Hi, Can you tell me where I am please?

Brother: What are you looking for?

There is a prolonged silence. They stare at each other and then Brother says:

Brother: Naz! Is it you?

He throws himself into his brother's arms.

As *Naz* spoke, his pace became quicker and the delivery louder, and his gestures more flamboyant. Brother did not move, till the moment he realises that the person opposite him is familiar. Then, Brother raised his head slightly in order to make eye contact with Naz. Naz and Brother remained completely still.

When Naz finally directed the question 'Can you tell me where I am please', Brother paused briefly, took a deep breath, remained motionless, and then replied 'What are you looking for' in an overemphasised, drawn-out way while he was clearing his throat. There was another long pause while nobody moved, until Brother broke the silence with the line 'Naz, is it you?'. Another silence followed and then they lifted their

chest and shuffled their feet slightly before throwing themselves into each other's arms.

Suitcase's T/D interrupted this run-through once the S/As began moving around the stage patting each other's backs. He suggested that they needed very specific blocking directions in order to continue to shape the material. However, before the T/D's interruption, everyone had 'felt' that the scene had been performed perfectly. According to them, they had managed to convey the melancholy and awkwardness of the unknown space, the uncertainty of who the other person was, the surprised state and the effusion of happiness when they recognised each other. The 'success' of this run-through in the S/As' eyes was down to them knowing their characters' psychology intimately. According to Petros and Maria, this was manifest in the pauses and silences, the stillness and the extremely slow pace and finally the effusive recognition.

However, Petros stopped the scene. It was not 'working' for him. Then, instead of there being a consensual feeling among the practitioners that they had 'got it', Naz and Brother turned to Petros and waited for advice. According to Petros, the S/As were not 'feeding off' one another and therefore there was no 'impulse' to say the dialogue. The scene had silences, pauses, stillness, and outbursts, and the psychologies of the characters had been investigated and explained by both Petros and S/As. However Petros did not feel that the exchange had been 'natural'.

What is identified here is that the same features "can be 'read' to opposite effect" (Maxwell, 2003:182) that is, double reading takes place. Although both of the scene runs had the same ingredients, this did not make them meaningful in the same way: for the interpretive community, one run felt right whereas the other did not. There were many instances where a scene runs 'felt' right for many but not for Petros and he

had stopped the scene's run in order to repeat the blocking of lines or even change the whole scene. This became apparent when a student, in one of these instances, said "Nothing satisfies him (Petros)". Petros was reluctant to give praise to S/As. This is how he was as a character. He was a perfectionist.

Because of my experience in theatre, and involvement in these rehearsal processes, I similarly had the experience of one scene 'working' and the other not feeling right. As described previously with regard to the Recognition Scene, when a scene 'works', feels 'good' or feels 'right', participants – and in this case I include myself with my own acting and directing experience – want to rely on supportive phrases such as 'more real' and 'having more depth'.

What was certainly a constant in the practitioners' engagement with each scene was their commitment to interpretation. There was intense effort put in to analyse, interpret and feel every part of the performance. Here T/Ds were not engaged in struggles to institute potential readings of their performances; instead they were working to limit generation of multiple meanings (Maxwell, 2003). The reward for T/Ds and S/As in matching the psychological interpretation of their characters with their physical manifestation of role, is the capacity to make a performance 'real': in these cases, to demonstrate what good school theatre-making is.

6.6. Recognising the Right Rehearsal Work

When the *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* T/Ds helped S/As to discover their characters' psychological states, this sensation was intimately tied up with how participants understood themselves within the theatre field. The extent to which acting practices 'felt right' for the practitioners should be considered in terms of the relationship between the

social world and the agents who exist in it, and who are complicit in maintaining that world.

Bourdieu argues that, for social agents, those moments in the social world that feel intuitive (or spontaneous or right) are moments when there is a direct fit between field and habitus. The ‘feeling right’ is learnt. T/Ds and S/As, in both processes, in their gradual acquiring of a habitus, had learnt to bond particular states of affect to particular sets of discourse. The moment that S/As said ‘I’m really going to cry’ or when recognition ‘felt’ right were framed in very specific ways.

In both *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*, the majority of the S/As had taken part in school theatre performances throughout their schooling years. Three out of four T/Ds had put on theatre performances throughout their teaching career. Fairytale’s T/D, Katerina, had the least experience as this was her first encounter with the school theatre field. It was therefore a reciprocal teaching / learning process for both T/Ds and S/As. In her interview, Katerina acknowledged this when she said:

I learned alongside [the S/As] to work with zeal, passion and spontaneity and, for the most part, without the fear of being exposed, of ‘creasing’ the sparkling wrapper [of omniscience] which we, the teachers, carry along.

(Katerina, interview, June 2010)

T/Ds taught and were taught how to ‘feel’ and ‘label’ the right things. They had to know how to identify what it was to discover the playwrights’ intentions, what it was to examine people’s psychologies, and also had to recognise what it was to discover and construct meanings. The exchanges between S/As and T/Ds were where the ‘identification’ work took place. For the rehearsal, practice being marked as authentic or legitimate needs to be understood, mainly in terms of an operation of ‘identification’, ‘embodiment’ or ‘recognition’ (Maxwell. 1997:19).

In *Suitcase*, Petros worked with the two narrators more closely than with any other S/A for several reasons. Firstly these two S/As effectively shared the same role and more work was needed in order to distribute the text accordingly. Also, the narrators operated as commentators and directly addressed the spectators about the story, acting as a link between the production and the audience. In addition, the two narrators had to coordinate and frequently synchronise their movements, gestures and voices, acting as a choir and a dance ensemble at the same time. Petros even spent more time ‘finding’ positions for the narrators within and around the story so that, rather than merely acting as narrators, they would be empathetic towards the characters or make comments about the characters’ life situations. While Petros tried to distribute his directing time equally amongst the S/As, or at least in proportion to each of their needs, in the case of the narrators he was far more involved.

At the beginning of the story the narrators opened the suitcase and displayed all the valuable toys and objects *Naz* carried with him during his journey. Petros told them that they should present the objects to the audience with melancholy and not as playfully as they did. “Ok, sir, we know what you mean”. This process was reinforced in the stage space as the two female S/As, Nena and Lisa, were encouraged to re-shape their performance. At one point, Petros interrupted a run-through to tell the narrators that their display of the toys and objects was sincere. Instead of delivering the line in a playful way, now they were being told that the tone of the line was earnest. It was up to the S/As not only to understand Petros’ direction cognitively, but also to feel it in their body. During the next run, Nena and Lisa, took their time and rather than brushing it off and just deploying objects, they focussed more on their tone, listening to each other and pausing before continuing with the next toy. “Yeah. That’s it”. This ‘it-ness’ did not simply refer to the re-shaping of the delivery in semiotic terms. Nena and Lisa were

learning how to connect an affective state with very specific language, the language of script as well as the very specific language of the directions of T/Ds.

In the *Fairytale* process, there was a S/A Nikos, who had been trained in an out-of-school theatre ensemble. He had participated in professional children's theatre productions. He was the most experienced of all the S/As and neither T/D had to spend a great deal of time directing him. While the T/Ds' directions to the other S/As were usually very analytical and detailed, they addressed Nikos with only brief instructions. While other S/As would have to try their blocking once or twice, or would need more explanation or guidance, Nikos would act almost immediately. The by-product of this was that during breaks other S/As would seek Nikos' advice and, by watching him rehearse, all the students taking part in the play gained in awareness and training.

6.7. Naturalisation through repetition

“repetition is the mother of all learning”¹ (a Greek saying) = (practice makes it perfect)

“Oh! Not again Sir”, “Oh! Not again Miss”; these two phrases were often spoken by students when they were told to re-run a small piece of work or to run through a whole scene. As S/As familiarised themselves with the language used by T/Ds, they ‘learnt’ to make their own pointed suggestions which sounded much like the physical direction afforded them by T/Ds. Gradually, S/As’ rehearsal work started to feel ‘natural’ to them. Instead of hesitating on stage or searching for words to describe characters, plot and text, they started to offer explanations of and reasons for their

¹ Did T/Ds apply this as teachers or as directors based on Stanislavski ‘Method’? This is to be examined further.

characters' psychological state; they were also quick to describe their own experiences in terms of whether or not they 'felt right'.

If the initial focus of rehearsal practice is on the 'identification' of experiences, the subsequent focus soon turns to the S/As 'naturalising' them (Maxwell, 1997:19). Had all the T/Ds simply directed S/As to just 'feel natural' on stage, they would have been unable to produce spontaneous performances because 'natural' acting cannot come out of direction to 'be' or 'feel' a certain way spontaneously but out of repetitive practice. Roach, drawing on Diderot and Stanislavski, explores ideas of repetition and spontaneity in acting practice, where the actor, paradoxically, rehearses and rehearses to produce a spontaneous performance:

In the early stages of an actor's effort – either as a beginner or at the start of rehearsals for a new role – his body resists his will: his gestures die stillborn, words fail him, his rhythms splutter and lurch like a new machine whose parts do not quite fit. As he repeats himself in rehearsals and exercises, however, testing the pulses of his imagination, probing his physical and mental limits, these hesitations tend to fall away one by one; his assurance generates energy, until he seems more thoroughly alive than ever before. The paradox is evident: the actor's spontaneous vitality seems to depend on the extent to which his actions and thoughts have been automatized, made second nature. (Roach, 1985:16)

These descriptions are helpful in understanding the practices of T/Ds and S/As. The latter were untrained as actors but had years of theatre school experience and repetitive practice behind them. And yet, strangely, the impulse work did not come 'naturally' at all. Why? Why did S/As have the urge or the need to ask T/Ds constantly how to do something? And why were S/As so tired of repetition? The former, the T/Ds had brought their roles of 'teachers' into an 'under –construction- for performance' environment.

Roach describes a ‘machine whose parts do not quite fit’, a generation of ‘energy’, being ‘thoroughly alive’, and having ‘actions and thoughts ... automatized’. The ‘machine’ image is powerful: T/Ds’ habitus of ‘drama/acting teacher’ could be translated to ‘fit’ into or with the habitus of these ‘under guidance’ S/As and in these two rehearsal environments. The machine metaphor is not intended to introduce explicit structuralism – the participants were not merely small parts of a giant pre-given social structure. However, it is intended to foreground how ‘right’ feelings are embedded in specific cultural contexts.

This is exactly Roach’s project. In *The Player’s Passion* he exposes how dominant scientific paradigms informing selfhood, namely what he terms as ‘psychology’ and ‘physiology’, have, over the centuries, informed theories of acting. Thus it is concerned with the socio-historical domains associated with specific performance conditions. What I am pointing towards here is that ‘natural’ acting and ‘spontaneous’ feelings are not the result of repeating any practice but the result of acquiring, developing and repeating a thick weave of bodily corporealised dispositions that are associated with a specific social world, in this case school theatre.

In rehearsals S/As were being taught how to recognise discovery work, how to decode and make meanings; they observed how they were being directed by T/Ds and also saw what it was to embody these ideas, what it felt like to marry states of affect to particular discourses. Bourdieu and Wacquant describe this as a sedimentation process (1992:22) where a habitus is gradually “lodged in the body”. For musicologist Steven Feld, this is a process whereby the recognition of a specific style, in his case, in music, is experienced as an intuitive, feeling sense; that it is intuitively ‘real’ (1994:112). Maxwell draws on Feld’s account of the ‘groove’ in music, pointing out that Feld’s use of the

term ‘intuition’ hides the labour of identification and interpretation (1997:20) on the part of social agents. Maxwell summarises:

Feld’s argument is that although the feeling of intuitiveness that constitutes the ‘groove’ is learnt, the fit between any given experience and one’s learnt expectations of that experience is experienced, affectively, as primal, as unmediated. (Maxwell, 1997:20)

With the S/As, especially during the building of their characters¹, the process of ‘identification’ and ‘interpretation’ was made explicit through the teaching process. During the rehearsals S/As ‘learnt’ about discovering character and self so that whenever they felt a particular synthesis between dialogue and physical action, they recognised this as a moment of revelation: for instance when *Katia* from *Suitcase* discovered the association between her reality and the character she portrayed by stating “I’m really going to cry”; or when *Poormother* from *Fairytale* recognised the relationship between dialogue and embodiment. In Zarrilli’s terms “when one becomes encultured into a system of practices it often feels natural” (Zarrilli, 1995:323).

Recognising these practices helped both T/Ds and S/As to label them: they were articulating rehearsal work in the dominant discourses of the field. The *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* participants were continually moving between learning working practices, experiencing those practices, and labelling or explaining them. Turner’s research on experiences of disease and pain is productive here. In an effort to loosen the hegemonic hold that positivist, physiological models have, he argues that researchers should avoid conceptualising the body within a single philosophical paradigm. He suggests that “we should encourage research which will be open both to the idea of the body as lived

¹ See Chapter 3 – Creating Characters.

experience (Leib) and to the discourse of the body as an objective presence (Korper)” (Turner, 1992:57) and adds that there is a constant dialectic between the two.

It is the dialectic that most concerns us here. Zarrilli, using Turner’s work to reflect on his own fieldwork in Southern India, assumes that:

Practitioners speak from their experience of the body-in-practice (Leib), that these explanations are discursive representations of the body (Korper), and that there is a constant process of negotiation between experience, the set of discursive formations available and how an individual thinks and talks about the experience of practice at any given moment (Zarrilli, 1998:7).

What Turner and Zarrilli point to is the negotiation between experience and discourse. All T/Ds, with their experience of putting on school theatre performances and participating in theatrical seminars i.e. experience “acquired in previous struggles” (Bourdieu, 1990b:135), were ‘enculturating’ S/As into what school theatre and ‘real’ acting was about. They introduced them to particular discourses that they would then use to explain states of affect¹.

To recap thus far: the discourses circulating in rehearsals operated at the level of talk and at the level of embodied experience, where particular affective states were coupled with the idea of ‘feeling right’. However, a formalist semiotic analysis proved insufficient to judge whether a scene or a moment in rehearsal ‘worked’ as certain performance features can be read to opposite effect, the opposite meaning. For instance the argument between Petros and Manolis about what *Naz*’s brother had written on the card. Manolis insisted that the words “a few people smile back to you” was an optimistic statement while Petros claimed that these words show exactly the opposite, Manolis during the rehearsal played it with a happy smile in his face. Mike Alfreds, in *Different*

¹ See previous chapter where Katerina urged students to ‘feel’ the character and consequentially to make her ‘feel’ what they ‘feel’. Explaining the ‘states of affect’ will help them to build or to understand their character.

Every Night , (2007) provides exercises requiring “Playing the same text with different actions” or “Playing the same text and the same action differently” are designed to point out “that a line of text can be played in innumerable ways,” (Alfreds, 2007:172-3). Petros and Manolis agreed it was on the audience to decide.

Rather, the extent to which acting practices ‘felt right’ were associated with the logic of the school theatre and the participants’ positions within it, something that was made most explicit through the teaching and transferring of ways of being.

6.8. Making, and Being Made, by Sharing/Acting

So, what exactly constitutes the feeling of ‘rightness’ for these practitioners? What constitutes the affective states¹? Implicit in the above are questions of subjectivity, for:

... no matter what constituting power we assign the impersonal forces of history, language, and upbringing, the subject always figures, at the very least, as the site where these forces find expression and are played out (Jackson, 1996:22).

By ‘subject’, Jackson is not invoking a subject/object divide, but instead suggests that any idea an individual might have about subjectivity and objectivity is always grounded in an ‘I’, even if this ‘I’ has no agency. In other words, in order to understand how the school theatre rehearsals were meaningful to practitioners, it is productive to turn to T/Ds’ and S/As’ experiences in their lived immediacy.

T/Ds and S/As were producing ‘inspired’ performances that somehow lacked an obvious sense of agency: the performance moved the actors emotionally rather than the actors having control over the performance. This is clear in the aforementioned example,

¹ The experience of emotions.

when a student from *Suitcase*, so moved by the plot, exclaimed: “I’m really going to cry”. Rather than viewing such occurrences as “objective structures or subjective intentions” (*ibid*: 26) either through structuralist thinking or within a more existential or purely humanistic framework, they are better understood phenomenologically. The oxymoron between objectivity and subjectivity thereby ceases to be a problem:

If these terms are seen as indicative of the way human experience vacillates between a sense of ourselves as subjects and as objects; in effect, making us feel sometimes that we are world-makers, sometimes that we are merely made by the world (*ibid*:21)

During rehearsals, T/Ds and S/As partially understood their work as making conscious decisions: they would actively search the play text for clues about characters, and they would explicitly shape scenes and interactions. However, they also experienced their practice as if the act, the scene, or the exchange informed their performances; that is, in Jackson’s terms, they were being made by the world: the violin-playing in *Suitcase* for example helped ‘make’ *Mariangela’s* and *Naz’s* deliveries; the movement of other actors shaped *Poormother’s* movements. Similarly, T/Ds’ ideas were informed by external factors such as the current political and social situation in Greece - the financial crisis and the heightened sense of racism due to the presence of illegal immigrants in the cities.

T/Ds led S/As to experience both ‘being’ a body and ‘having’ a body, during the procedure mentioned in previous sections) and there was a continual negotiation between the two. This not only recalls Turner’s distinction between ‘Leib’ and ‘Korper’, but is also Lewis’ thinking when he argues that:

Embodied selves are not only sites for mediating language and experience, they are also where subjectivity meets objectivity, since we live our lives as

our bodies, but these bodies also become objects other than (or ‘othered from’) ourselves (Lewis:1995:222).

In many cases already cited here, both T/Ds and S/As had the experience of existing apart from/outside their bodies. When Petros, the T/D from *Suitcase* assisted S/As with the drowning scene and encouraged them to move their bodies according to the music and to what the narrators were saying, it was only then that *Chrissia* moved according to the lines. Similarly, Fairytale’s T/D guided *Poormother* to show with her body the awkwardness she felt when she entered the scene with *Teacher* standing there watching her.

Following Zarrilli’s point about the pervasiveness of psychological realism in actor training, participants “will often experience a ‘real’ disjuncture between their minds and their bodies” (Zarrilli, 1995:13) where the mind actively controls and informs the passive body. This is Jackson’s point when he suggests that human beings can sometimes experience themselves as disembodied (Jackson, 1996:31). However these disembodied selves cannot claim "objectivity".

The ‘inspired’ performances discussed in this section of the thesis were not always centred on individuals, but in fact were mostly experienced as shared moments when every one of the participants felt collectively ‘right’. When Jackson and Lewis question the very grounds on which claims of ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’ are made, they are suggesting that subjectivity cannot be collapsed into an idea of individualism: for these thinkers, subjectivity does not imply an egocentric, inward-looking state:

Subjectivity entails a reaching beyond the self. Insofar as experience includes substantive and transitive, disjunctive and conjunctive modalities, it covers a sense of ourselves as singular individuals as well as belonging to a collectivity (Jackson, 1996:26).

The affective dimension of rehearsals needs to be understood as a shared experience between both T/D and S/A practitioners. When the T/D and S/As from *Suitcase* had tears welling in their eyes, we, the viewers, were ecstatic from what we had just watched in the rehearsal; when the *Queen* from *Fairytale* collapsed in tears on stage during the rehearsal, we, the viewers, remained speechless; this feeling of right-ness – the feeling that they had found something very profound – was felt amongst us all. This was a moment where any individual sense of agency was in fact collapsed into a moment of ‘sociality’. It can be understood in terms of a notion of intersubjectivity:

For social phenomenology, praxis is seldom a matter of individuals acting alone. It is a mode of shared endeavour as well as conflict of mutual adjustment as well as violence. Subjectivity is in effect a matter of intersubjectivity, and experience is inter-experience (Merleau-Ponty in Jackson, 1996:26).

The notion of intersubjectivity, emphasising “experience in relationships” (Jackson, 1996:26), offers a means to describe the moments in rehearsal when no single practitioner was ‘driving the scene’, and when, instead, a collective rhythm¹ was at play. In these moments, the practitioners did not talk in terms of making conscious choices, but in terms of sharing a ‘right’ feeling. These constituted intersubjective experiences for, as Jackson argues, “selves are no more single existences than are atoms and molecules” (Jackson, 1999:6) so to talk of individual agency, or indeed, individuals operating apart from others at certain ‘right’ moments of rehearsal, would be an extremely inadequate description.

I will now turn to the last part of this thesis: making the familiar strange in order to be objective despite my own subjectivity as, in observing and researching theatre in schools I was working in a familiar field.

¹ I once heard (Feb. 2013) on BBC radio that rhythm is a kind of ecstatic experience that transports practitioners and audience into the subconscious.

CHAPTER 7: Epilogue

This chapter opens with an extract of my notes instead of an introduction:

The opening night of each of the plays took place three days apart, Suitcase on 2nd May 2010 and Fairytale on 5th May 2010. Both performances played to full houses comprising friends, families, colleagues, local authority representatives as well as people from the local community. In Fairytale I sat in the middle of the auditorium in order to have a full view of what was happening on stage. For Suitcase, I sat behind a column as I wanted to hide myself. The presence of people that were not involved with the productions emphasised my own strange position in the process: not part of the performance and yet not quite outside it. For example, in the case of Suitcase my name was mentioned in the programme. Petros also mentioned audience (parents, friends, peers) presence helped a lot to make this performance come true

In this epilogue, I will sketch an overview of the findings of the thesis, tease out some central issues to have emerged from my analysis and suggest how they might lead to further areas of research. Finally, I will conclude by reflecting on additional questions of methodology first posed at the start of my project.

7.1. Before the rehearsals or what did I want to find out?

“T/Ds own preparation for the school theatre production should be well under way. Indeed, all T/Ds, have spent adequate time selecting the appropriate play that would fit student needs, interests and the number of the students participating.” (Interview notes, June 2010). They had not discovered all of the intricacies and meanings of the play but the aims were clear: to create a performance, to make the process enjoyable and for the students to be educated (T/Ds’ interviews, June, 2010). The key ideas embedded in the

plays had triggered T/Ds' interest and motivation to mount a performance: political corruption in Greece due to financial problems (*Fairytale*) and the rise of illegal immigration in Athens, Greek society's reaction and the further implications both for the immigrants and for the host country (*Suitcase*). T/Ds were also aware of the shortcomings of the rehearsal spaces: School B, a basement, sunless space having a space which in every rehearsal would be "transformed into a stage rehearsal space" (Petros interview, 2010) and School A, the top, 4th floor of a building with no heating facilities for the winter time and no lifts.

All T/Ds knew they had to work with untrained actors and they were also aware of their limited knowledge in the field (Katerina, interview, July 2010). Three out of four of the T/Ds were relatively experienced having mounted previous performances with students in different schools. For Sophia, this was her first encounter following her attendance at a theatrical seminar.

It is obvious from my background that the context of my research focus is a familiar one. I was eager to examine the topic as I realized that hardly anything had been published about the classroom teacher as director; neither the literature nor the curriculum documentation provided insights from the perspective of the teachers involved in this form of theatre (Geest *et al.* 2012:8), and I was hoping with this research to make a contribution to the field of theatre and drama in education in Greece and to start a political and public debate about the issue.

I considered that I entered the field with a professional obligation to generate more understanding about the ways teachers should approach the mounting of school performances.

The field of research was familiar to me but all T/Ds were unknown to me as were the S/As. I was familiar with the plays as I had watched them performed, both in professional and school theatre productions. But I had never observed their preparation and, more importantly, how the directors, in my case the T/Ds, would work in order to mount the performances. This has been the main question which guides this thesis

7.2. Some Conclusions

In the introduction to this thesis, two encompassing aims were suggested: to study the relationship between the minutiae of rehearsal work and wider working contexts, and to develop a research approach appropriate to the study of the rehearsal processes undertaken by teachers in a school theatre context. These questions are all the more relevant now that specific theatre education teaching positions have been abolished in primary and secondary education. To most educationalists' regret, Drama Education is no longer part of the national curriculum. (see Appendix 2)

Initially this chapter will turn to the first of these concerns. This thesis argues that the working practices and discourses of the rehearsal agents (school community, local educational community, parents, T/Ds, S/As, venue owners) were inextricably caught up with the struggles of those practitioners – T/Ds and S/As, as well as the school and local authorities with which they were associated - to legitimise and authenticate their theatre-making within the Greek school theatre scene. Furthermore, the practices and discourses – the participants' involvement in and commitment to their work – were sustained on the level of naturalism (see more in literature review) of embodiment as well as on the level of exploring feelings and creating a performance.

It was my intention in order to engage with the practices in *Fairytale* and *Suitcase*, to start by understanding the crucial, literal arenas of the work. I began with the spaces and places: how they were located geographically, how they were positioned and what exactly the practitioners' experiences of them were. Then I turned to temporal considerations: how rehearsal scheduling, as well as the time allocated for each process, inform the work done and even particular embodiments. Lastly, I examined the rehearsal practices themselves – what it meant to 'work at the table' or be 'on the floor' – and argued that these practices and the discourses with which they were framed must be understood on their own terms rather than through recourse to ideas of acting/directing traditions. T/Ds did not invoke 'Stanislavsky' or 'Brecht' or any other pioneer in the field, but rather referred to 'discovering meaning and character' or 'constructing a performance' by applying 'naturalistic'¹ approaches.

I then turned to a more thorough consideration of these two key discourses: 'discovering' and 'making' meaning. Rehearsal works which involved observing the playwright's stage directions and being accurate with dialogue were framed as 'discovering meaning' and 'remaining loyal to the playwright'. Under the more general umbrella of 'discovery', a cluster of three metaphors stood out as key acting discourses. These revolved around psychological depth (see *Fairytale*), emotion (see *Suitcase*) and believability where the discovery of character also became a discovery of the participants' selves – for both T/Ds and S/As. However, the work was also described as 'constructing a performance', one in which elements of production – blocking, gesture, props, costumes, music and so on – were orchestrated for the prospective audience. (Stanislavski, 1938)

¹ "Naturalism aspires to a sort of photographic reality that hides its structure" (Alfreds, 2007:353)

Importantly, I turned to the two dominant rehearsal discourses of ‘discovery’ and ‘meaning making’ and their associated practices were intimately bound up with these broader struggles in making meaning and constructing a performance. For *Fairytale*, the work of ‘discovering meaning’ was tied to Kambanellis’ status as an intellectual writer who had ‘foreseen’ the current situation that Greece finds itself in: that of financial corruption. So T/Ds had knowledge of the context in which the play should take place. S/As were familiar with the situation described in the play by Kambanellis 53 years ago. For *Suitcase* the ‘discovering meaning’ and ‘constructing a performance’ process was also bound to current Greek social concerns: the increasing number of illegal immigrants living in the country and the attitudes of both politicians and communities towards them.

I approached the two rehearsal processes at the level of embodiment, where the practitioners’ work operated as a feeling-thing: something was felt which enabled participants to say in rehearsal, ‘We got that moment right’.

“At its simplest, the Stanislavski ‘system’ is: WANT, DO, FEEL. I want something. Therefore I do something. Consequently I feel something.”
(Alfreds, 2012: 42).

7.2.1. Findings

1. T/Ds **chose a text** that meets the students’ and schools’ needs: many roles; suitable for their age; educational purpose; acceptable to local authorities; provides students with moral and social values and models - i.e. plays that are thought provoking. (T/Ds interviews, 2010)
2. **Casting**. The division of roles resulted from reading the text and from improvisation. (T/Ds interviews, May 2010). All students read random parts of

the play and usually “who is going to play what” occurs naturally within the group. “The final decision is made by us” Petros said in his interview and Katerina added “our goal is for every student to be happy with the part s/he gets. It is a dialectical process between the students and us who are responsible for the final evaluation, based on: physical appearance, abilities of students, special characteristics” (T/Ds interviews, May 2010)

3. T/Ds **set the rehearsal schedule** based on their needs as well as their students’ needs. Both schools decided to rehearse out of school hours so that the rehearsal would not distract the students from any of their other activities. This was made clear at the opening night of *Suitcase* by Petros, when he said that not a single school hour had been used in order to put on this performance (From field notes, 2nd May 2010).
4. Each rehearsal started **by reading** each scene or part of a scene in order to clarify its meaning and **discover new meanings**. Discussions at the “table” started by exploring a simple word (see example about the word “terrific”) and would end up with discussion about social issues and S/As’ views on those (e.g. illegal immigration, moral and economic corruption).
5. All T/Ds used **psychological/naturalistic approaches** in order to build S/As’ characters. Feelings, emotions, real life events, physical characteristics were among the aspects T/Ds mentioned in order to help S/As build a character which was as real as possible. Props, costumes and scenery depicted such detail that little or nothing was left for the audience to discover through their imagination. The use of props in *Suitcase* was more minimalistic but the same was not the case with the costumes. Costumes exactly represented their characters e.g. the ‘Pimp’ wore a black trench coat, dark glasses and a black hat.

6. All T/Ds were driven on the one hand by the forthcoming political and social corruption in Greek society and on the other by the immigration problem which had arisen in Greek society, often causing social instability and aggressive behaviour towards foreigners. During the rehearsal process, racism and discrimination had begun to increase in Greek society – attacks on people of different colour, for example – and on a political level – the rise of the far-right party in the Greek Parliament.
7. Moving onto the “floor” students were asked to embody the fruits of the “table” discussion. This was when the oral was transformed into the physical. Any opinion they might have had expressed at the “table” had to conform to T/Ds’ decisions even if they had argued on the issues before the ‘on floor’ process. For example the huge argument Petros and *Naz* had on how the line “*they almost smile back*” should be spoken by the character. It was agreed that Petros’ opinion should be followed as it was nearer to the director’s vision. **The superiority of director overrode the dialectic process.**
8. However, in another instance S/As disagreed with the music theme which was chosen by Petros for a particular moment in the play. Contrary to normal practice, S/As imposed their opinion and justified this by arguing that “the play talks about teens, we are teens, we know better what kind of music is appropriate for this part” (Rehearsal notes, March 2010). Here the power of **youth overrode the “conventional” director authority.**
9. **Power relationships** were present throughout the rehearsal period. Power relationships concerned: the researcher (me) who was presented as the ‘one with the superior knowledge’ in the field; T/Ds whose roles as classroom teachers were mentioned regularly by students especially during the ‘teaching’ process of

the role development e.g. when a student said ‘he can hardly say a good word even in the classroom’ (Rehearsal notes, March 2010). T/Ds’ directorial role was clearer when they put themselves on the ‘stage’ and guided the students from such a short distance that they could even hear their breathing.

10. Fusion of ‘strange images’ with T/Ds’ Stanislavski naturalistic directorial approach was a departure from the strictly conventional school theatre approach. For example in *Suitcase*, where a student passenger in the ‘Bus Scene’ plays a traditional tune on the violin and another student sings along, in order to strengthen the already powerful moment of a mother being separated from her son. A powerful moment for theatre itself, where a play written by a foreign playwright, referring to a country which is not the country where the play is being staged, performed in a different language to the original, was entangled with a traditional song which touched all of those watching the rehearsal as well as the audience on the opening night. **Theatre allowed the mixture of different cultures.**

11. **The embodiment of the director’s emotion** off the stage. Coaching on and off the stage is, usually, a given condition in any rehearsal room. The ‘outbreaks’ of anger, emotional moments, arguments, shouting, the heat of the rehearsals, the sweating, the disappointment, the insecurities are, in most cases, expected. In both processes though, two characteristic moments were unpredictable and unexpected. It was the dress-rehearsal of *Fairytale*. The atmosphere was tense due to the pressure of the preparation. One T/D fainted. A similar atmosphere occurred in *Suitcase*’s dress rehearsal. Students seemed not to listen to Petros’s instructions to return to their places. He threatened them that he would leave the room. He warned them for a second time and then left. At times, and this was

one stark example, T/Ds embodied the tension of their personal emotions and not those experienced in their role as directors.

12. It is worth mentioning a personal experience that made me wonder if I was doing the right thing; there were moments during the rehearsal period where - in my opinion - the power of the director dominated the room. Students would work as puppets in **an almost abusive way**. I do not mean that students were physically or psychologically abused but rather intellectually coerced as they were forced to follow the director's will. According to Mark Fortier, to:

... struggle for a more humane more democratic process in theatre production is to search for an unsustainable ideal ... as what seemed democratic in one situation from one point of view may not seem so in another situation or to other viewpoints ... all that can happen is an endless retooling that is never perfected (Fortier, 1997:9).

13. T/Ds formulate their ideas about theatre through their own practice over their teaching years and their personal research. Three of the T/Ds had been mounting performances for many years. Only for one of the four was it the first encounter with school theatre performances. They would not call themselves 'directors' in any case. Although they applied directorial strategies and methods, they considered themselves primarily and only classroom teachers. (Interviews with T/Ds May 2010).

What constitutes theatre for T.Ds? I present here some of their responses:

"Theatre for T/Ds has a clear aim: the performance." (Petros, interview, May 2010)

"The dynamic within the team will set the aims and its route" (Petros, interview, May 2010).

“It is a journey of martyrdom to self-knowledge and self-esteem.” (Maria, interview, May, 2010)

“Although it is theatre in its germinal form, it gives students a different perspective of life. It is a departure from the dominant power of television.” (Petros, interview, May, 2010)

“Theatre creates an expressive environment which is impossible to find it in a school classroom and it is a way to love school since this is happening in the school environment.” (Sophia, interview, May 2010)

“Theatre teaches cooperation between the participants, expression of their deepest feelings, their characters’ emotions and a development of all their senses in order to face reality: to have fun, laugh, get pleasure, to be creative, to live.” (Katerina, interview, May 2010)

7.2.2. Discussion of Findings

It is very important to show how my study reveals its findings in ways that are clear and fairly represent what our data tells readers about the phenomena at hand; in the case of my thesis, firstly how T/Ds directed the plays and secondly the effect of exogenous and internal factors on the rehearsal process. It is a researcher’s job as data analyst to sculpt the block until the story embedded in it can be released and seen clearly. As someone might guess from these comments, the emphasis will be on reflecting on and discussing the findings and in what way they underscore the aim of the research.

As familiar as I was with the fieldwork site and activity, the research denied/refuted many predictions and preconceptions I might have had. What would I discover about the forms of relationships between people involved in the fieldwork? Would I be able to predict the approaches and techniques the T/Ds used in order to mount the performances? I might have known the outline – reading at the table,

bringing it on the floor, starts and stops, run through - but not the detail revealed by the research.

Some of my findings are inextricably connected but all are interrelated in order to create a wholeness of understanding.

Choosing the play is a paramount issue for all T/Ds. The text should be appropriate for S/As needs: educational, topical, number of characters, enjoyable. (T/Ds interviews May 2010).

Casting the play was also important for T/Ds. This generally took a democratic form through 'dramatic play', through reading and suggestions coming from S/As themselves. Final decision were made by T/Ds taking into account all the aforementioned factors (T/Ds interviews, May 2010).

Setting the rehearsal schedule helped students to make arrangements for other out of school activities in which they were involved. Having rehearsals on Saturdays was a relief for students as some of them had encountered problems with their families, a few of which thought theatre not so important as other activities. (Fieldnotes, 2010)

Exploration of meanings in the rehearsal room firstly involved "at table" discussions which helped T/Ds to guide S/As on the physicalization of the characters. Schwandt (2001), in *the Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, defines "meaning" as, "a taken-for-granted assumption" (p. 153). He further states that a physical action has different meaning for different people. The discovering of meanings triggered interesting discussions, constructive arguments which in turn helped in the creation of the characters.

Power relationships were apparent during these conversations. In the majority of occasions student conformed with T/Ds 'vision' of the performance (Fieldnotes, 2010). The T/Ds' apparent overriding power sometimes made me wonder why S/As has to go through this process of 'unveiling' the meaning of the text and 'building' character. (see Finding 12)

However, bridging these different cultures – T/Ds and S/As – and all the additional 'cultures' and issues that were present during the rehearsals – playwrights, language, translated text, political situation, moral issues - worked towards the creation of the performance and ultimately conformed with T/Ds' perception of what theatre is (see Finding 13).

The merging of cultures, the transculturation, "whereby cultural material passes from one society to another" (Taylor, 1991:162) was an issue that was apparent in both performances. In *Suitcase*, transculturation occurred between two different societies coming from two different countries, languages and the fictional era of the play and the rehearsal era are similar. Similarly in *Fairytale* two different subcultures within the same culture: same language same country, but two different eras reflecting the same issues: moral and financial corruption. History repeats itself.

Because the findings of this thesis are subject to my own interpretation, further research is needed on the following questions and issues.

7.3. . Areas for Further Investigation

There are several areas that have emerged from this project which may provoke future research:

7.3.1. Theories of Acting

When writing about acting, academics have recognised that the practices and discourses associated with performing operate as projective texts, immediate responses to the words and images created by the actors, through which to consider specific socio-cultural paradigms. For instance, a primary tenet of Zarrilli's 1995 anthology, *Acting (Re)Considered* (1995), is that the participants in a play implicitly enact a theory of acting. From my research observation, I deduce that when a T/D mounts a performance s/he does not use a specific technique but simply allows the guidance to flow naturally from her/him. That is, each of the T/Ds created a theory of acting and, throughout the rehearsals, demonstrated 'how to do' and 'how to say': they guided S/As, and it was S/As' own bodies, language and 'soul' which created their character. I contend that their theories, such as they existed, were the product of practice and reflection.

My own findings also support this: in Chapter Three I examined how T/Ds led, guided and taught psychology-centred discourses to describe characters based – possibly subconsciously - on Stanislavski. Zarrilli couches theories of acting within what he terms 'meta-theories' which involve "culture-specific assumptions about the mind/body relationship, the nature of the 'self', the emotions/feelings, and performance context" (Zarrilli, 1995:4). This concern preoccupies Roach in *The Player's Passion* where he explains how "conceptions of the human body, drawn from physiology and psychology, have dominated theories of acting from antiquity to the present" (Roach,

1985:11). Peck (1997:171), reviewing Zarrilli's acting anthology, argues, "The study of acting is among the most revealing indices of the obsessions, prejudices, and preoccupations of any age".

In the *Fairytale* and *Suitcase* processes, parts of the acting practices also involved the performers exploring their own psychologies, knowledge and tolerances while interrogating and learning about *themselves*. However, T/Ds' conceptions of self were not fixed but continually shifted between teacher and director on the one hand, and between classroom teacher and drama teacher on the other. The different discourses of rehearsal work were associated with specific constructions of what it was to be 'a practitioner/teacher-drama teacher-director' and what it was to be a 'self'. Zarrilli (1995) argued that acting practice, itself a socio-cultural variable, involves or manifests a particular socio-cultural figuring of selfhood. This work suggests, at least implicitly, that there are multiple conceptualisations in the world of what it is to be a human being; that selfhood is multiple and fractured; and that for instance, there are differences between a Western self (and we may wish to nuance and problematise 'Westernness') and a Hindu Indian self, an Indigenous Australian self and a Nepalese Yolmo self. Similarly, a classroom teacher differs from a drama teacher who in turn differs from a director. As Appadurai (1990) suggests, there is a variability in the relationship between language, feeling and concepts of the self in human societies.

Following Zarrilli's more recent thinking that "modes of cultural practice exist as a set of potentialities of [amongst other things] self" (Zarrilli, 1998:8), it would be useful to extend the notion that there are broad socio-cultural concepts of self and suggest that within the very culturally-specific contexts of the two rehearsal processes, 'selfhood' was conceptualised in more than one way. It is not enough to locate a 'Western theory of self', for each of the rehearsal paradigms manifested a particular

subjectivity. In the rehearsal processes I documented how the 'dual' identity of the T/Ds manifested itself in the fieldwork. It appears that each person was inextricably bound by these two characteristics of their cultural identity: teachers as/and directors. In addition, each T/D had to cope with their given role in order to put on the performance. In the words of a Greek poetess: "We all play roles that are inherent to us" (Maria Laina), which implies that we are all potentially actors and a method is needed in order to guide, to channel those that are willing to expose themselves in acting.

T/Ds 'method' of acting was not completely 'grounded' in an acting tradition. Therefore their subjectivities continually shifted, resisting a fixedness or wholeness. In other words because they had no formal theatre training, they had no refined, integrated theories of acting as would be possessed by trained directors. Future research in this direction would call for phenomenological frameworks in order to document this dimension of rehearsal.

7.3.2. Performance Analysis

As explained in Chapter One this study chose not to focus on the actual performances of either *Fairytale* or *Suitcase*. However, in many respects, it is feasible to step from a study of rehearsal towards a study of performance, and so performance analysis still emerged as a theoretical concern, and several questions arising from the writing of this thesis might elucidate the performance analysis of these two rehearsal cases.

The community

The first question concerns semiotics. As argued previously and as has been argued by others, it is necessary to move away from a formalist paradigm of *a priori* taxonomies of theatre elements. Instead, any performance analysis needs to be grounded in the interpretive community for which this performance is made meaningful. Following Geertz, the emphasis should fall on what he terms “a matrix of sensibility” (Geertz, 1983:102) – on how art is invested with meaning by any given community – rather than how artwork is somehow the source of immanent signs through an analysis of its formal features. This thinking is directly relevant to the performance analysis project in at least three ways.

The audience

The first concerns a turn towards social semiotics where, for instance, any division of the ‘elements’ of performance – or in Geertz’s words, art in “craft terms” (*ibid*:95) – needs to incorporate the audience, for whom the performance is a meaningful part of their lives. That is, the labelling and discussion of the ‘internal’ characteristics of a performance must be grounded in a specific community of interpretations. For instance, it is equally as important to record whether or not a community identifies with particular aspects of a performance as it is to implement a list of features of that performance. Ideas of ‘costume’ or ‘music’, for example, may not enter the discourse of some audience groups.

A second related area concerns addressing how and where the performance fits in or relates to the lives of an audience. One way to approach this is via Bourdieu’s analysis of “cultural capital” and more specifically, matters of taste and social class. This is central to Shevtsova (1993), where she focuses on audiences. In her research,

she gathered quantitative and qualitative data on education and responses to particular theatre performances. In one chapter, she is very much concerned with “social and cultural elites”. More recently, she has in her terms “appropriated” Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* in order to understand particular staging decisions, thereby studying specific, socially informed ways of being (2002). This idea that art – in this case, performance – directly relates to the broader contexts of spectators’ lives is exactly Geertz’s preoccupation (1983). He suggests that the theoretical approach commonly adopted by Western aesthetics “blinds us to the very existence of the data upon which a comparative understanding of [art] could be built” (Geertz, 1983:98); that a discussion of art in terms of “how it is used, who owns it, when it is performed, who performs or makes it, what role it plays in this or that activity, what it may be exchanged for, what it is called, how it began, and so forth” (*ibid*: 97) cannot be separated from the artwork itself.

Lastly, I found that an analysis of performance must include theories of affect: people are very much affected by the world in and around them. This framework might be productive in thinking about why audiences attend performances. As Geertz writes, “to study an art form is to explore a sensibility” (*ibid*: 99). By using a word like ‘sensibility’ rather than, say, for example ‘understanding’, the emphasis is shifted away from a purely cognitive paradigm (‘to understand something’) towards a more corporeal paradigm (‘to feel something’). This is not to generate a mind-body dualism, but to recognise that even the experience of ‘being a mind’ is one of corporeality; as Lewis (1995:222) says, “...we live our lives as our bodies....”.

7.3.3. Other issues which emerged from the research.

More immediate issues related with my research and worthy of further examination are:

What is the historical development of TiS in Greece?

Further research on T/Ds' opinions on TiS could be done, regarding the sociological aspect of TiS e.g. "Do the other teachers and school management see TiS as a valuable learning experience or simply as a public relations exercise?".

A more directly related issue with the current research could be: *'What forms of dramatic/artistic challenge does TiS present to TDs and how aware of these are they'?* or *'What satisfactions do TDs gain from TiS work?'*. I have touched briefly on the latter issue as it is part of the interview I conducted with the T/Ds after the whole process had finished.

While I did not explicitly participate in the rehearsal work, I was certainly involved peripherally: Petros from *Suitcase* would often ask me to take notes – any notes I wanted – in order that he could make subsequent changes in his stage directions or approach.

"But these are going to be my perception of the play" I told him once.

"It will be fine. You know the work by now and you know how I want the play to be" he replied.

I was surprised for two reasons: he trusted me, considering me part of the team, and he felt confident I would do the 'job'.

Katerina from Fairytale, asked me to go to the back of the rehearsal room and to make sure that I listened to S/As' voices. She told me to pretend that I could not hear the actors clearly so that the S/As would speak louder.

As my fieldwork was restricted to a 5-month period, how could I check if participants had behaved "naturally" during this period? Would, all the participants, have behaved the same if I had not been present during rehearsals? What, if anything, has changed – for the better or worse – because of my presence?

These anecdotes are not to celebrate "the researcher" although, interestingly, Conquergood (1991) points out that one's reputation as an ethnographer is established through the bodily, physical and emotional risks taken in the field. What these anecdotes do is to foreground Geertz's position that ethnography requires theory to stay close to the ground and, more especially, to stay grounded in the embodied practice of the groups being studied (1973:24). Moreover, the notion of "embodied research" recognises ethnography's capacity to effect real change in the researcher.

This is of concern to McAuley who concluded her study on space in performance with a chapter about the spectator. She specifically talks about what she calls "energy exchange", suggesting that "the live presence of both performers and spectators rated complex flows of energy between both groups" (McAuley, 1999:247). On the opening night of *Suitcase* in the Drowning Scene, a voice from the audience said in a dramatic tone "these poor kids". Invoking a particularly visceral image, McAuley writes: If theatre is an event occurring "in the actors' organisms, as Grotowski claimed (1969, 86-7), then it is also occurring in the spectators' organisms." (McAuley, 1999:235) Here, an important question emerged for further discussion: if there is an event which occurs within the actors and within the audience, should this also have

occurred within the directors' vision? Is it possible for a director to predict all of the affect and effect between audience and actors, or are some only revealed during performance?

Another issue worthy of detailed exploration is the influence on the process of the gender of the school theatre director. In this research, four T/Ds were observed, one male and three female. Would S/As have felt/responded in the same manner if all T/Ds had been male or female or comprised of two males and two females? Research shows that gender matters in the professional theatre field (see Rebecca Daniels (2000), *Women Stage Directors Speak: Exploring the Influence of Gender on Their Work*). Does it matter in school theatre? This is a very interesting issue that is worthy of further research. Additionally to the above what is worthy of further research is a deep investigation into personality factors of T/Ds, their knowledge of theatre, general reputation amongst students *before* rehearsals begin; also the kinds of students who seem to volunteer to be in productions.

Another important issue I have touched on and worthy of examination in detail is the building of S/As' characters. How did they construct their roles? How are theatre-making activities related or not to pupils' prior experience in theatre productions. A further question worthy of enquiry is how these productions have affected the participants on matters of art or personal opinions.

Another researcher, or even I, could look at the data again and could decipher and decode different 'aspects' that emerged during the processes. Things that 'popped up unannounced', without expectation or prediction e.g.

- a) Parents' implicit involvement with the productions: there were parents that did not like their children's involvement with the theatre. They felt their children should dedicate more time or even the 'same quality time' to study as they did to 'theatre';
- b) The outbreak of swine flu that delayed the collection of my data and in some way changed the direction of my research, e.g. a governmental bill which forbade school assemblies of more than 10 minutes in order to avoid the spread of the virus. Lots of schools cancelled already scheduled theatre productions. I had to expand my geographical research area in order to locate T/Ds and schools that were, in these circumstances, prepared to put on performances. That reminds me of a line in a famous Greek play which I directed in London a few years ago "Just the brave ones are able to love, the others just cheated on their dreams". I observed that the T/Ds took measures to protect both pupils and themselves, e.g. they did not hold rehearsals during school hours when the whole school was in attendance, preferring to rehearse on Saturdays when the school was closed and only the participants were present.
- c) The explosion of the bomb that killed the Afghan boy - so sad but at the same time so topical regarding the School B play, gave so much food for thought. A couple of rehearsals in School B were spent in discussing issues concerning refugees and legal and illegal immigration. If I examined my data on these particulars rehearsals I could have given a completely different direction to my research. It could acquire a social focus instead of a theatrical one e.g. "What is the impact of current society issues that effect a school theatre production?". Or someone could associate these two cases with current issues e.g. "How current society issues – explosions, financial crisis – might have an impact on directing methods"

d) During the pilot period of my research I became cross with a T/D who had recorded the lines of the S/As, requiring them to move their bodies in order to match what was heard from the speakers. Some could consider this as a good ‘exercise’ of synchronisation, whilst others could think that pupils became puppets in their master’s hands. For me, questions and ethical issues emerged immediately: how much freedom did the pupils experience in this production? What exactly was the T/D’s role - to be a controller? What learning could pupils take away from this experience -e.g. how to coordinate body movements with their own recorded voices? Someone could argue – as this particular T/D did – “it is very important that the pupils can be heard at the back of the room. Parents are here in order to hear their children”. All the above issues are related with exogenous factors.

7.4. Imposing Strangeness

“The impression of an unfamiliar familiarity” (Dimitris Tarlow, about rehearsals, 7th July 2013)¹

Until now in the thesis, the outside perspective of the researcher has been foregrounded by considering what it was to be present in the rehearsal rooms and yet not be directly involved in creating theatre. However, there have been some implications of doing research in ‘my own backyard’. ‘Doing’ ethnography usually involves a sustained time spent in a different cultural context and then reflecting on and writing up such time. Much has been written about the process of the fieldworker approaching the different cultural context; this process is central to anthropological

¹ Dimitris Tarlow is a pioneer director http://www.onlytheater.gr/magic_bus/arthra/3278-o-dimitris-tarlooou-grafei-gia-ton-lefteri-vogiatzi.html.

thought. In fact, Rabinow once defined anthropology as “humanity encountered as other” (in Tomlison, 1993:5). However, what are the implications of doing research closer to home? In my case the school theatre field – a familiar context to me given that I was (albeit some time ago now) involved in school theatre productions and in professional theatre as an actor and director? Whether and to what extent should researchers share their own experiences and values with their informants – T/Ds, S/As – and if they do so – how this affects the gathering and the analysis of data (Mc Lean & Leibing, 2011).

This very specific research context is a productive site in which to rethink ideas about ‘insideness’ and ‘outsideness’, not only for the researcher but also for the social agents. This rethinking has started circulating in ethnographic studies: Lewis (1992), in his work on Brazilian Capoeira, refers to himself as a ‘semi-insider’ because he believes his position was somewhere in-between; similarly, Zarrilli, in his fieldwork in Southern India, refers to himself as an “outsider-insider” (1996:11), again invoking a creative tension. Hastrup points out that, as ethnographers dismantle the category of ‘culture’, the previously “substantially defined entities” of “selves” and “others” have been “refined as categories of thought” (1995:6). How has the dialectic between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ – between ‘self’ and the ‘other’ – operated during my research?

Some anthropologists have argued that getting personal with informants, including sharing experiences, is crucial to building mutually respectful relationships with them (Lovell, quoted in McLean & Leibing 2011:184). Others even claim that mutual sharing opens the door to an experience – near anthropology, as it fosters an intersubjectivity, which, despite its limitation as a research tool, is the “best we have” (cf. Van der Geest, 2007:13). This was apparent when, since we speak the ‘same language’, T/Ds asked me to help them within the process by keeping notes – in School

B – and by pretending that I am listening to S/As’ voices when I was asked to go to the back of the rehearsal room. Language may mean different things for the different authors, including for example knowing the terminology for the rehearsals as I was observing them for many weeks and T/Ds believed that I knew what they wanted from the rehearsal at particular moments.

During rehearsals, some of the things people said and did seemed initially very familiar. I was comfortable with much of the terminology used and with the structure of the processes. I knew about ‘starts’ and ‘stops’. ‘let’s stand up’, about ‘objectives’, ‘run-throughs’ and ‘tech-rehearsal’. This familiarity with form meant that I not only concentrated on what was being said, but also focussed on practitioners’ embodiments – on doings that are more difficult to record with notebook and pen. It was my ‘inside-ness’ in the school theatre field that secured me the placements in the first place, as it is generally difficult to gain access to rehearsals. However, this familiarity led to reluctance on my part to ask lots of questions as T/Ds assumed I possessed relevant knowledge. This was apparent in the way I was introduced to the S/As by Petros: “Dionysis is a theatrologist and he is here to observe rehearsals for his PhD work in London”. All too impressive: ‘theatrologist’, ‘observe’, ‘PhD’, ‘London’. My ‘inside-ness’ and the implied ‘superiority’ meant that no-one felt it necessary to ‘teach’ me about rehearsal or to explain about the ins and outs of what rehearsing school theatre entailed.

At the same time, while sharing similar conditions and exchanging personal experiences this did not mean that I was an ‘insider’. For instance, I had never previously met any of the teachers I was observing and I had never watched any school theatre performance in the specific schools I observed. In the beginning I was treated with some suspicion: S/As wanted to know if and where my research would be

published; some S/As asked me what would happen with the recorded material. I explained in detail that the material would be confidential and would only be used for the purpose of my research. Over time trust built up so that during rehearsal I was both part of the team and somehow outside it. I was careful “not to make generalizations based on one’s own experiences” (Geest, 2007:9).

This distancing is the very process I continued to undertake upon leaving the field. In the act of reflecting and writing, I imposed a strangeness in the two fieldworks and a strangeness imposed itself; I forgot what I knew of school theatre and theatre terms and rehearsal structures. An ethnographic approach, with its capacity for scrutinising the minutiae, displaced my complacency in terms of my implicit rehearsal knowledge, as I was forced to engage with how T/Ds and S/As - with the focus on T/Ds – understood their own practice. For instance I suspended my knowledge of ‘objectives’, ‘tech week’ and so on, and allowed T/Ds and S/As’ understanding of these terms, and of their working practices generally, to propel the research. In Clifford’s terms, I was, and still am, looking obliquely at collective cultural arrangements: I am making the familiar strange (Clifford, 1986:2-3).

At this point my project intersects productively with hermeneutic thought. Gadamer describes “the true home of hermeneutics” as “a place between strangeness and familiarity” (Tomlinson, 1993:21). Following Tomlinson, rather than understand my position of researcher as “a sporadic flip-flopping between recognition and assimilation of difference”, I wish to see it as sustaining “a presence of foreign-ness” (*ibid*: 23). For Bourdieu, the foreign-ness, or distance, comes through a commitment to reflexivity, where “it is not the individual unconscious of the researcher but the epistemological unconscious of his discipline that must be unearthed” (in Wacquant, 1992:41). I write about school theatre rehearsal, not just by reflecting on it, but because

I study it within specific institutional contexts. In the spirit of unearthing an epistemological unconscious, I offer the following: during my PhD candidature – a long process of researching and writing a thesis – my work inflected from a semiotic orientation with ethnography, into a hermeneutics of ethnography, embodiment and towards phenomenology, as it also is in negotiating and reshaping interpretations and evaluations.

As Born proposes, by focussing on Western cultural arenas not yet thus examined, the anthropological project might be “reinvigorated” and its frameworks “expanded” (1995:8). And so I am back to a notion of “expanding outwards”. This metaphor of ‘expanding’ recalls Ricœur’s thinking, for whom “familiarisation” or what he calls “appropriation” is not a “taking possession” but a “letting go”, whereupon when exposing oneself to a research project we receive from it “an enlarged self” (in Tomlinson, 1993:26).

Hopefully, my project has moved towards a process of expanding and enlarging ethnographic research and rehearsal studies by remaining on, in, and apart from, the pulses of other people’s practices. Eventually more people – teachers, directors, school theatre directors and even students in secondary school - will read this thesis and I hope that they can/will find a way of reflecting, rethinking and reshaping their own practices and even discovering new ones.

7.5. A critique of my research approach.

My purpose in this research was not a full description or a theory of how genres are constructed in the school theatre productions but an analysis of specific cases and analysis of the rehearsal processes for showing the complex ways in which genres are constructed in these cases.

Would I have contacted my research differently?

Using ethnography is not a panacea for any research and the same applies for my research. It is not a transparent research method (see LeCompte and Goertz 2001) but a situated methodological practice since researchers have to deal with different epistemological and methodological issues and tensions. For example, participating in a school theatre production involving one or two classes and for the whole academic year possibly could reveal more complex issues in the construction of the performance e.g. how activities are related or not to pupils' prior experience in theatre productions, and how these productions have affected the participants with regard to art or personal opinions.

However, ethnographic studies are generally criticized for having weak validity and reliability (see LeCompte and Goetz 2001 for a discussion). For example, my ethnographic research can be considered as a kind of "ethnographic simulation", to paraphrase Clammer (1984), if, for example, someone focuses on the issue of reactivity (see Wragg 1999, Cohen *et al.* 2007 for details). As my fieldwork was restricted to a five-month period, how could I check if participants had behaved "naturally" during this period? Would the participants, have behaved in the same ways if I was not present during the rehearsals? What changed, if anything, for better or worse, because of my presence?

I was also aware of, what McAuley has identified as producing a “selective description” (McAuley, 1998:76). An implicit ‘analysis’ of what was happening was already taking place. As I became increasingly aware of the limitations of the pen and paper and the voice recorder some selective decisions were by necessity taken on the spot. If I conducted my research again I might have used another ‘eye’, an additional observer, so I could combine the two sets of fieldnotes and could see what I had missed. In that case I might be more reluctant to take notes as I would be aware that someone else was doing the job for me.

I am aware that the forbidding by the Greek authorities of my videoing all or parts of the rehearsals caused even more limitations in my research such as “Loss of important visual cues such as facial expressions, gesture, body language, movement” (Wragg, 1999: 17), whilst a simple sound recording may not suffice as “sound quality can be poor without a radio micro phone, especially if acoustics are poor; difficulty in identifying individual children when they speak; analysis time substantially increased. (*Ibid*)

These hypothetical limitations as well as the limitations and tensions of ethnography (see LeCompte and Goertz 2001 for a discussion) signal that ethnography, as I have already mentioned, is not a panacea research method but *a situated methodological practice* since researchers have to deal with different epistemological and methodological issues and tensions.

In order to minimize these limitations, I used a descriptive system which:

... may have some pre-set categories, but they are much broader and more flexible than those of category systems. Their flexibility allows the observer to consider the context of behaviors, their sequences, their meanings, and to use naturally occurring events as the starting points and finishing points of recording sequences. (Simpson and Tuson, 1995: 46)

Malinowski has pointed out that doing ethnography is like “building all vast edifices of reconstructive hypothesis or philosophical reflection on sand” (Malinowski, 1932: xxv). unless the researcher builds ethnography on the understanding of the ‘other’ who is been observed. This is the next step of the research: that is when the researcher achieves intersubjectivity: “a convincing analysis of how knowledge and insight can be shared between individuals” (Geest, 2012:1).

Bridging distances

I am aware of the gaps between what I observed, what my jotted notes were about, the transcribed data, the translation and finally what I put down on paper in order to write my thesis. Some might argue that I only recorded the data that are beneficial to my research. However, as the research delved deeply into the whys and hows of subjectivity, all the aforementioned subjectivity merged together and I tried to arrive at more credible and respectful intersubjectivity leading to a better ethnographic work. (McLean & Leibing 2007. Geest, 2012).

Practical outcomes to inform and improve school theatre

My research goal in this thesis was to examine, from an ethnographic perspective (ethnography as a means for exploring on-site issues), the trans-contextual relations which are involved in the construction of genres, how genres are constructed in two school theatre productions in two different schools in relation to their official policy of theatre education and also to inform a model which other practitioners can use in order to put on performances in other settings. What I hope this research achieves is that

all practitioners can relate it to “their desires” or use its outcomes to ease their “anxieties” (2012:19).

By revealing my and all four T/Ds’ journeys, this anthropological research invites any practitioner to become more aware “of the personal enrichment that anthropological stories about other – far away or nearby – have in stock for them” (Geest, 2012: 20).

My attempt to situate and reflect on my ethnographic perspective (a kind of *methodological reflexivity* or *awareness*) signals that “we are all self-styled researchers” and “no one ‘owns’ ethnography” (see quote below) since the power of ethnography seems to be its methodological flexibility and reflexivity within different research contexts:

It is probably correct to say that there are as many versions of the work characterizing each major category as there are researcher working in it. *We are all self-styled researchers*. Individual differences we bring to our work only exacerbate the infinite variation that different problems and settings present. (Wolcott, 1992: 38-9, his emphasis)

No one “owns” ethnography, any more than anyone owns participant observation or case studies. Even those who have styled an identifiable approach, e.g., Blumer’s symbolic interactionism or Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology of the late 1960s, Eisner’s educational connoisseurship/criticism of the 1970s, or the postmodern anthropology of James Clifford and George Marcus in the 1980s - must watch it take shape in the hands of others. (Wolcott, 1992:48).

7.5.1. Self – Exploration

What I have learnt through conducting this kind of research and about making school theatre

Being in the field for all these months made me feel part of the gang and needed. It also made me feel that I helped in both processes. During *Suitcase*, Petros would ask me to take notes on his behalf. When I told him “But I do not know what you have noted”,

he replied, "You've been here for so many months you should know by now what I don't." His trust and certainty of our compliance made me feel a bit uncomfortable. It made me think of my position as a researcher: whether I had crossed over the boundaries that make a researcher what s/he is; whether in fact there *are* any 'boundaries' and if so, what they are. Is not trust a prerequisite in any ethnographic research? If that is the case, the trust shown to me by Petros meant I had made half of the journey. What, then, was the reason I felt uncomfortable with Petros' trust.

I felt that I had betrayed him and the group. I felt that I had built this 'trust' for the sake of my research and not for who they were. I felt that I had given to them a 'self to be liked' in order to conduct my research. Had it not been for my research I would have never have contacted them and I would possibly not have heard about their work. Yet they had evoked all these feelings, thoughts and ideas in my heart and mind. How would I be without all these emotions? Writing these lines now my answer is clear: I would be poorer. Without wanting to underestimate it I would have only mentioned the cognitive part of my journey. Through the exchange and the invocation of emotions, the interactivity of ideas that were instilled in me throughout the process, I am sure my being was enriched. I hope the same applies for my research, that it will have been enriched by my emotions:

It is not the avoidance of emotions that necessarily provides for high quality research. Rather, it is an awareness and intelligent use of our emotions that benefits the research process (Gilbert, 2001b:11).

I can see also students' distinctive emotions, since I was thinking that children are just imitators and representatives of adults' emotions. Now I realised that children are a source of producing emotions for themselves and for others. If someone were to ask what I would take away from this research, without hesitation, I would echo this interview with Panayiotis Tsevas:

I understood that we exist through others. I believe that I could not exist on my own – and I am not saying that out of erotic or professional insecurity or out of the fear of loneliness and solitude, but what I mean is the inexistence of something that connects you with time, space and the people in it. This could be called death. (Panayiotis Tsevas, interview, Lifo, 01-05-2013)¹

During the months that I have been writing this thesis, my thoughts and feelings embrace all these people I met almost three years ago. I am writing this thesis, having in my mind and in my heart their images, pictures, voices, and the recall of moments that were important for me. I can recall moments through my notes and what is surprising for me is that those moments produce feelings. How amazing it is, when the past becomes present, how wonderful when there are people that you can share these moments with, even though they may not remember the same feelings felt at that time.

There were moments during my research that indigenous and exogenous events provoked discussions that really made me question my values as a human being, the values of my research, the values of humanity.

There were moments that as a researcher I wanted something really important to happen, something ‘big’, something I have never experienced in other rehearsals. I wanted my research to be unique, different and consequently I, as a researcher, would have discovered something that I have never discovered and explored before.

I had this urge for the ‘different’, for the ‘magnificent’ and they would not come. There were moments I thought I would fail to discover the – till then – unknown in this field. I would blame students for not providing me with the ‘appropriate’ data/material in order to support my research questions or even to re-invent them. I would blame T/Ds for not guiding S/As the way I would have guided them. I would go way from the rehearsal room with the ‘emptiness’ that something you crave for has not been fulfilled.

¹ A well know Greek musician <http://www.lifo.gr/mag/features/3791> (translated by the researcher).

My ego was dented. My ego was overtaking the researcher's goal: to investigate the field work.

I was afraid that I was losing it: to fulfil my supervisors' intentions and recommendations: to observe thoroughly how T/Ds guided T/As; I was missing data I needed to prove or even rethink my initial research. I had entered this 'phase of futility', nothing seemed right; nothing was going in the right direction. The only thing I was preoccupied with for so many years seemed to have let me down. My thesis took me over. My thesis was controlling my head: T/Ds, S/As, rehearsals, notes, data were not satisfying me.

Rehearsals had become a trivial matter. Where was the "magic" that McAulay was talking about, where was the "method of directing that is deployed during the process" – (Fitzpatrick, 2007), where was I? Here was my ego again. I decided to carry on the collection of data mechanically without having any expectation for the 'big discovery'. I decided to go with the 'flow' and let things happen naturally. I was listening to the same lines regarding the directions of T/Ds, the same lines regarding the plays, same ways of S/As' approaches.

I felt S/As were not interested at all in what they were doing. T/Ds would force them to repeat scenes, lines, gestures, blocking. It seemed like a torturous process and not as a creative – whatever that meant then – build up. 'Is this what *I* am doing when I put on a performance?' I'd asked myself. "Is this what we T/Ds do in order to fulfil our vanity?" I started to feel sorry for S/As and guilty for making them go through this martyrdom.

And then I remembered what made me enter into this 'martyrdom': it was my intention to help all these S/As to find a way to approach the laughs, silliness, hugs,

compassion, knowledge, learning, discovering, doing something different from others, something better than others, not wasting their time in various local cafes, talking about different things with their peers – even in the rehearsals they were questioning their own values and beliefs about life issues (Nazism, fascism, parents, adults, society, death, life, morality, values) and developing their own maturity; learning about being an adult.

I am ‘friends’ with some of these S/As through Facebook and I still communicate with T/Ds; whenever I go to Greece we have a coffee and catch up. I am so proud of these S/As/students. Many of them still participate in performances put on by the University theatre group of which they are members. All of the T/Ds continue mounting performances in different schools– I receive emails inviting me to and informing me about what they do - but continue an equal consideration for students as well as art. I am so proud and honoured at being part of their group and for them allowing me to complete my journey. Or has the journey just started?

Appendix 1

Song titles:

1. *Once upon a time*
2. *Dance*
3. *Sailor, old sailor*
4. *At the river, the cannon acquiesces .*
5. *Flag song*
6. *Hector and Andromache*
7. *The smith*
8. *I throw my heart into the well.*

Iakovos Kampanellis, the playwright reports:

« Never crossed my mind to write the lyrics. When I was writing the *Fairytale without a name* I was thinking to ask Nikos Gatsos¹ to write the lyrics for songs that assist the transitions from scene to scene. Although Nikos liked the *Fairytale* he couldn't integrate himself with a text that wasn't his. I asked Vaggelis Gkoufas², but I got the same answer. So, I forced myself to write the lyrics. My only concern was that Xatzidakis³ would compose the music. It would have been a shame and a waste of his time if he had received just mediocre lyrics. It wasn't just my pride, but also because his participation meant a lot for the practitioners in the production. I wrote the lyrics and I met Manos. He left me wondering for a few hours whether he would compose the lyrics or not ... at the end he burst into laughter”⁴.

¹ A famous Greek Poet.

² A famous lyrics writer and poet as well.

³ An important Greek composer.

⁴ Από τις «Ανοιχτές Επιστολές στον Μάνο Χατζιδάκι», εκδόσεις «Μπάστας - Πλέσσας», 1996.

Appendix 2

ΘΕΜΑ : «Απάντηση στην Ερώτηση
με αριθμό 4934/24-1-2012

Απαντώντας στην Ερώτηση με αριθμό 4934/24-1-2012, την οποία κατέθεσε ο Βουλευτής κ. Λευτέρης Αυγενάκης, σχετικά με τη Θεατρική Αγωγή στα σχολεία, σας κάνουμε γνωστά τα ακόλουθα:

Όσον αφορά στην Πρωτοβάθμια Εκπαίδευση, στο ισχύον ωρολόγιο πρόγραμμα, εμφανίζεται το μάθημα του Θεάτρου στην Ε΄ και ΣΤ΄ Δημοτικού στο δίωρο του μαθήματος της Αισθητικής Αγωγής που περιλαμβάνει επιπλέον τα Εικαστικά και τη Μουσική.

Στο ωρολόγιο πρόγραμμα των 961 Δημοτικών Σχολείων με Ενιαίο Αναμορφωμένο Εκπαιδευτικό Πρόγραμμα (ΕΑΕΠ), το μάθημα της Θεατρικής Αγωγής εμφανίζεται ως μονόωρο υποχρεωτικό σε όλες τις τάξεις (Α΄-ΣΤ΄) στο πλαίσιο του μαθήματος της Αισθητικής Αγωγής.

Στην απογευματινή ζώνη του Ολοήμερου Προγράμματος προσφέρεται ως επιλεγόμενο μάθημα η Θεατρική Παιδεία από μία (1) έως πέντε (5) ώρες εβδομαδιαίως κυρίως για τα τμήματα της Δ΄, Ε΄ και της ΣΤ΄ τάξης.

Στο ωρολόγιο Πρόγραμμα, που περιλαμβάνεται στη Φ.12/819/104706/Γ1/13-9-2011 Υπουργική Απόφαση, στο πεδίο «Πολιτισμός- Δραστηριότητες και Τέχνες», η Θεατρική Παιδεία διδάσκεται μία (1) ώρα την εβδομάδα σε όλες τις τάξεις.

Όσον αφορά στην Δευτεροβάθμια Εκπαίδευση, στην Α΄ τάξη του Γενικού Λυκείου υπάρχει δυνατότητα ενασχόλησης με το Θέατρο και τη Θεατρική Αγωγή στο πλαίσιο του μαθήματος : Ερευνητική Εργασία (Project) και συγκεκριμένα στον κύκλο «Τέχνη και Πολιτισμός», τρεις (3) ώρες εβδομαδιαίως

Επιπλέον, στα τρία Καλλιτεχνικά Γυμνάσια και Λύκεια υπάρχει κατεύθυνση Θεάτρου-Κινηματογράφου όπου προσφέρονται δεκαέξι (16) ώρες εβδομαδιαίως σε όλες τις τάξεις του Γυμνασίου και του Λυκείου για τη διδασκαλία αυτών των μαθημάτων.

10

Περαιτέρω, επισημαίνεται ότι σε όλα τα Νηπιαγωγεία, Δημοτικά, Γυμνάσια και Λύκεια κατά τις Σχολικές Εορτές αλλά και στις Πολιτιστικές δραστηριότητες οι μαθητές και οι εκπαιδευτικοί δραστηριοποιούνται σε θεατρικές παραστάσεις. Η δραματοποίηση, επίσης, χρησιμοποιείται ως διδακτική μεθοδολογία σε ποικίλα διδακτικά αντικείμενα.

Η ΥΦΥΠΟΥΡΓΟΣ

ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΦΙΛΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

Εσωτερική διανομή

1. Γραφείο κ. Υπουργού
2. Γραφείο κ. Υφυπουργού
3. Τ.Κ.Ε.



ΑΚΡΙΒΕΣ ΑΝΤΙΓΡΑΦΟ
Ο ΠΡΟΪΣΤΑΜΕΝΟΣ

Appendix 3

1. How did you start your drama program in your school? (Πώς ξεκινήσατε το θεατρικό πρόγραμμα στο σχολείο σας?)
2. Where did you rehearse? (Πού κάνετε πρόβα?)
3. Have you been provided with drama facilities in your school? (Παρέχονται διευκολύνσεις για το θεατρικό πρόγραμμα?)
4. What was your first play you worked on? (Ποιο ήταν το πρώτο έργο που σκηνοθετήσατε ή συμμετείχατε στην προετοιμασία του?)
5. How did rehearsals go at the beginning? (Πώς ήταν οι πρόβες όταν ξεκίνησαν?)
6. How did you deal with the un-discipline students? (Πώς χειριστήκατε τους απείθαρχους μαθητές?)
7. Were you aware of the memorizing problem as you were working with them? And how did you deal with it? (Ανησυχούσατε για τυχόν προβλήματα απομνημόνευσης του κειμένου από τους μαθητές? Αν ναι πώς το αντιμετωπίσατε/χειριστήκατε?)
8. How many performances do you do each year? (Πόσες παραστάσεις κάνετε κάθε χρόνο?)
9. What plays did you perform this year? (Τι έργα κάνατε αυτό το χρόνο?)
10. What kind of plays have you been performing through your career as a teacher? (Τι είδους έργα ανεβάσατε κατά τη διάρκεια της καριέρας σας ως εκπαιδευτικός?)
11. How many students are in your class (school)? (Πόσους μαθητές έχει το σχολείο σας?)
12. How many students tried out for your last play? (Πόσους μαθητές χρησιμοποίησατε στο τελευταίο έργο σας?)
13. Do you do all the directing yourself? (Σκηνοθετείτε μόνο/η σας?)
14. When do you do your rehearsals? (Οι πρόβες πότε γίνονται?)
15. How many hours of rehearsal do you put in on each play? (Πόσες ώρες προβών κάνετε για κάθε σας έργο?)
16. How many months do you prepare your drama? (Πόσους μήνες κάνατε προετοιμασία?)
17. Do you have any other kind of person helping you directing the play (colleague, parent, head teacher)? (Έχετε κάποιον ου σας βοηθά στην σκηνοθεσία? Συνάδελφο, γονέας, διευθυντής)

18. What made you to choose this particular play? (Γιατί διαλέξατε το συγκεκριμένο έργο?)
19. Can you give me the figures for all the costs for the play? (Πόσο κόστισε το έργο? Ποιοι διέθεσαν τα χρήματα?)
20. Where do you get the costumes from? (Who made the costumes? Mothers, parents) (Πώς βρήκατε τα κοστούμια;) Ποιος τα έφτιαξε? Γονείς?
21. What tasks are done by the parents volunteers? Ποιες εργασίες έγιναν (ΑΝ) από τους γονείς?
22. Would having (if not) a stage at school make life easier for you? (Έχοντας «σκηνή» στο σχολείο σας, σας διευκόλυνε? Και πώς?)
23. How do the kids hold up? (Πώς διατηρήθηκε υψηλό το ηθικό των μαθητών?)
24. Do you enjoy your work? If yes why? If not why? (Σας ενθουσίασε η δουλειά σας? Αν ναι γιατί)
25. Do your students ever fight and argue? (Οι μαθητές σας διαφωνούσαν? Για τι θέματα?)
26. If your play includes music and dance do you rehearse in the classroom as well? (Αν το έργο σας εμπεριέχει μουσική και χορό, κάνατε πρόβα στον ίδιο χώρο και την ίδια ώρα?)
27. How do you conduct your rehearsals and performances? (Πώς καθοδηγείτε τις πρόβες?)
28. Do you have (keep) photographs of the rehearsals or performances? (Κρατάτε φωτογραφίες των προβών ή των παραστάσεων σας?)
29. Do the students really learn worthwhile skills doing drama, or is it mostly fun and games? (Οι μαθητές παραγματικά μαθαίνουν άξιες λόγου δεξιότητες κάνοντας θέατρο ή είναι περισσότερο για διασκέδαση και παιχνίδι?)
30. How do you select the plays you will perform? (Πώς επιλέγετε τα έργα που θα σκηνοθετήσετε?)
31. Is there interest among the students for doing drama? (Υπάρχει ενδιαφέρον από τους μαθητές για θέατρο?)
32. About the audience: who comes to the play? (Αφορά στο κοινό: Ποιοι έρχονται στην παράσταση?)
33. How do you conduct your auditions? How do you give roles to the students? (Πώς (Αν) κάνετε τις ακροάσεις για του ρόλους? Με ποια κριτήρια γίνεται η επιλογή?)

34. Do you get pressure from parents to cast their kids? (Εξασκείται πίεση από τους γονείς για να δώσετε κάποιο ρόλο?)
35. If you were to do drama with younger students, could you allow some of your older, more experienced students to help the young ones? (Θα επιτρέπατε σε μεγαλύτερους και πιο έμπειρους μαθητές γύρω από το θέατρο να βοηθήσουν νεότερους τους?)
36. Do you consider student's suggestions? (Λαμβάνετε υπόψη σας προτάσεις μαθητών?)
37. Do students come to think they don't need you at all? (Υπάρχουν μαθητές που πιστεύουν ότι δεν είστε απαραίτητο/η?)
38. Since and if you let them to do much, do kids ever think they know more than you do? Αν και όταν τους επιτρέπετε να αυτοσχεδιάσουν ελεύθερα, οι μαθητές νομίζουν ότι ξέρουν περισσότερα από εσάς?
39. Looking back, is there anything you would change about your strategy that might make things go better? (Σκεφτόμενος/η ξανά, θα αλλάζατε κάτι στην στρατηγική σας που ίσως έκανε τα πράγματα καλύτερα?)
40. What have you gained from your collaboration with your colleague? What, if anything, have you possibly learned from him/her regarding theatre direction (positive and negative aspects)? (Τι κερδίσατε από τη συνεργασία σας με τον/την συνάελφό σας; Εάν ναι, τι μάθατε από αυτόν/τήν σχετικά με τη σκηνοθεσία, θετικά και αρνητικά).

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